

Hafa Adai!

Five are appointed to CUC, MVA, Indigenous Affairs. PAGE 3
CPA chair: Competition is healthy for interisland travel. PAGE 5

\$1

Saipan Tribune



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WEDNESDAY MARCH 1, 2023

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TINIAN VISITORS

Personnel assigned to the 3rd Air Expeditionary Wing offload a C-17 Globemaster III assigned to the 517th Airlift Squadron, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, at Tinian International Airport, Northern Mariana Islands, for Exercise Agile Reap 23-1, Feb. 26, 2023. AR 23-1 presents an opportunity for Airmen from the 3rd Air Expeditionary Wing to practice and execute their ability to rapidly move personnel, materiel, equipment, and aircraft to, from, and within a theater.

U.S. AIR FORCE/TECH. SGT. HAILEY STAKER

Proceeds from sale of IPI equipment now above \$1M as 4th auction looms

By BEN BLASCHKE
Inside Asian Gaming

Editor's Note: Reprinted with permission.

Proceeds from the sale of gaming equipment and other assets formerly owned by Saipan casino owner Imperi-

al Pacific International have moved above \$1 million, with preparations now underway for a fourth auction.

Set to take place on 10 March, the latest auction will focus on remaining electronic gaming machines and other

assets, with Tim Shepherd of appointed receiver Clear Management telling Inside Asian Gaming there would likely be

two more auctions after this.

"The casino [Imperial Palace-Saipan] is really emptying

See AUCTION on Page 4

FAA: SMA should pay past due ASAP

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Federal Aviation Administration has finally issued a decision in Star Marianas Airlines' complaint against the Commonwealth Port Authority regarding its fee and methodology

'TOUCHBACK' COUNTDOWN
Days until 'touchback rule' takes effect on Sept. 30, 2023:
213

See FAA on Page 4

LOCAL

Members of the 23rd Legislature attend the Marianas Health Services Legislative Breakfast.

PAGE 2

LOCAL

Children learn how to make an outrigger canoe using basic paper-based construction materials.

PAGE 7

LIFE & STYLE

"Dilbert" disappears with lightning speed following racist remarks by creator Scott Adams.

PAGE 15

Marianas sees increase in drug trafficking

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

The Marianas has seen an increase in the use and importation of methamphetamine or "ice." In the last few weeks alone, a number of investigations have been launched into mail parcels containing "ice."

In an interview with John Tobon, special-agent-in-charge for Homeland Security Investigations Honolulu, the

See DRUGS on Page 4



FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Commonwealth Casino Commission board chair Edward C. DeLeon Guerrero presides over their regular monthly meeting in the CCC conference room at the Springs Plaza Building in Gualo Rai yesterday morning. CCC's office has been closed starting on Jan. 19, 2023, as all employees were terminated due to lack of funding.

INSIDE



LOCAL

Members of the 23rd Legislature attend the Marianas Health Services Legislative Breakfast.

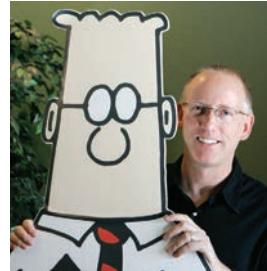
PAGE 2



LOCAL

Children learn how to make an outrigger canoe using basic paper-based construction materials.

PAGE 7



LIFE & STYLE

"Dilbert" disappears with lightning speed following racist remarks by creator Scott Adams.

PAGE 15



SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.



GOT A NEWS TIP?

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EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

Marianas Health hosts 'Legislative Breakfast'



Some members of the 23rd CNMI Legislature, including Sen. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan), center, seated in white, pose for a photo with Marianas Health representatives and health advocates and partners during the Marianas Health Legislative Breakfast yesterday morning at the Queen's Hall of the Kensington Hotel Saipan.

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
Reporter

Members of the 23rd CNMI Legislature attended the Marianas Health Services and health advocates' Legislative Breakfast yesterday morning at the Queen's Hall in Kensington Hotel, which served as a forum to discuss and

share health challenges facing the CNMI in the hopes of coming up with solutions to these issues.

Before the group divided into roundtable discussions, presentations were made—first by George Cruz's "Business as Usual"; then on oral cancer by Dr. Angelica Sabino, chief dentist at the Oral

Health Clinic of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.; then a presentation by Dr. David Hardt from Hardt Eye Clinic; Diabetes Education Center; Tiana Ranjo, Health Education specialist at the Center for Living Independently; Patricia Coleman, interim dean of the Northern Marianas College-CREES; Dr.

Devin Finco from Marianas Pharmacy; and George Cruz, president and administrator from Marianas Health.

At the same time, outreach booths were present from the Pacific Wellness Center, Marianas Home Care & Hospice, Sagan Hinemlo' Family Clinic, Allied Medical Supplies, H.A.F.A. Initia-

tive, Commonwealth Health Care Corps' Immunization Program, Brabu Pharmacy, CNMI Developmental Disabilities Council, and the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services.

In their roundtable discussions, some priorities they shared on how to improve access to healthcare providers, improve prior authorization process, improve quality of healthcare, access to universal health insurance, investment in equipment and personnel, and more health care education.

Sen. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan) said the meeting was informative and she was glad that she attended. She hopes that there will be more sessions like these for lawmakers in the future as it is "an eye opener for many of us, especially the newly elected officials that just got into the Legislature."

The roundtable discussions included talks with healthcare professionals "who are the providers in the community and see all kinds of medical, dental, and other issues."

"So this is a good effort to try to collaborate and meet in the middle with policy makers in the Marianas," she said.

When asked if there are any

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E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cnmiports.com

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 02-2023

Opening date: February 20, 2023 Closing date: March 10, 2023

Location: SAIPAN

Position(s): (1) ARFF General Maintenance I
(1) ARFF Mechanic II
(1) Lease Compliance Assistant
(1) Information Systems Specialist

SALARY

PL 3/1 to 3/12 (\$8.01/hr. to \$13.70/hr.)
PL 6/1 to 6/12 (\$9.07/hr. to \$15.85/hr.)
PL 14/1 to 14/12 (\$13.70/hr. to \$23.42/hr.)
PL 15/1 to 15/12 (\$14.38/hr. to \$24.60/hr.)

Location: PORT OF SAIPAN

Position(s): (2) Vessel Traffic Controller

SALARY

PL 4/1 to 4/12 (\$8.41/hr. to \$14.38/hr.)

Location: TINIAN

Position(s): (1) AOA Controller/Ground Maintenance-I
(1) Radio Operator/Weather Observer
(1) Custodial-I

SALARY

PL 5/1 to 5/12 (\$8.83/hr. to \$15.10/hr.)
PL 7/1 to 7/12 (\$9.73/hr. to \$16.65/hr.)
PL 1/1 to 1/12 (\$7.26/hr. to \$12.42/hr.)

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport no later than 5:00 P.M. on Friday, March 10, 2023.

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.robert@cnmiports.com and hrspécialist@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670) 237-6500.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director



A CULINARY JOURNEY

Satisfy your international cravings at The Terrace!

Our talented culinary team has crafted an incredible selection of international dishes for our Mexican, Italian and Japanese Izakaya theme live stations. Enjoy flavors from around the world with 15% local residents discount until March 31.

The Terrace Restaurant
Daily Buffet Available for Lunch and Dinner
Local residents enjoy 15% off until end of March

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ITALIA MIA
Every Wednesday - Thursday

JAPANESE IZAKAYA
Every Friday - Saturday

SUNDAY BRUNCH
Every Sunday

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Five are appointed to CUC, MVA, Indigenous Affairs

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie.delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios has appointed certified public accountant Rufo T. Mafnas, local lawyer Robert Harrison Myers Jr., and Guam Consolidated Commission on Utilities member Simon A. Sanchez, to serve as members of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. board of directors.

Palacios also appointed former Retirement Fund board member Rosa L. Igitol to serve as a member of the Marianas Visitors Authority board of directors, and former dean of the Northern Marianas College-Cooperative Research

Extension and Education Service Ross Hugh S. Manglona to serve as the resident executive for Indigenous Affairs.

The appointments of Mafnas, Myers, Sanchez, Igitol, and Manglona need the advice and consent of the Senate. If confirmed, each will serve a four-year term.

In separate appointments issued last week, the governor informed Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) that he nominated Mafnas to serve as a member of the CUC board representing Saipan, and Manglona as resident executive for Indigenous Affairs.

Palacios said he and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang are confident that the five appointees are qualified and will be assets on the important boards and to their administration.

With respect to Mafnas, Palacios said he and Apatang are confident that he is qualified and will devote time and efforts to the best interest of CUC.

UOG faculty contribute to 'Cambridge History of the Pacific Ocean'

Three University of Guam faculty members contributed to a two-volume publication released by the prestigious Cambridge University Press.

The Cambridge History of the Pacific Ocean represents a comprehensive survey of the history of the Pacific Ocean, an area making up around one-third of the Earth's surface, from initial human colonization to the present day. More than 80 authors contributed to the publication's 64 chapters in two volumes. Volume I explores the history of the Pacific Ocean pre-1800 and Volume II examines the period from 1800 to the present day.

Dr. Anne Perez Hattori, a professor of History, CHamoru Studies, and Micronesian Studies at UOG, wrote Volume II's introduction and the series conclusion, "Choppy Waters." She also served as a co-editor overseeing 16 chapters in Volume II.

"With 64 chapters, we were challenged to identify the leading experts in each topic. I feel gratified that we were able to include two [more] contributors from UOG—master navigator Larry Raigetal and emeritus professor [Dr.] Chris Lobban," said Hattori.

Micronesian seafaring traditions featured

Raigetal, assistant professor of Island Wisdom in the CHamoru Studies program, and a master navigator from Lamotrek Atoll, in Yap, wrote a chapter on ancient seafaring traditions in Micronesia.

"Although there is a decent body of literature about seafaring, this is the first scholarly piece by an actual master navigator, making Raigetal's chapter truly historic. We were very honored when he accepted our invitation to contribute and are thrilled with his chapter," said Hattori.

Lobban, an emeritus professor of Biology, wrote a chapter on island ecosystems and was

assisted by Maria Scheffter, a post-doctoral researcher. Hattori regards Lobban as a globally recognized authority on tropical Pacific environments.

Six years in the making

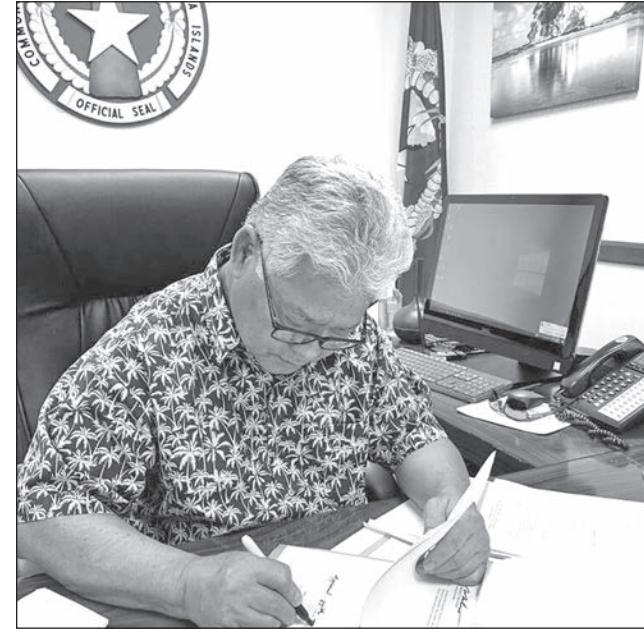
The two volumes offer different ways of telling and viewing history through the Pacific's exceptionally diverse cultural traditions and over timespans that require multidisciplinary and multicultural collaborative perspectives.

The project began six years ago when Professor Paul D'Arcy of the Australian National University invited Hattori and a small group of Pacific historians to meet in New Zealand and conceptualize the ambitious multi-volume project.

The process included pitching the product to Cambridge University Press, identifying

The two volumes are on Amazon.com

The University of Cambridge's publication arm, Cambridge University Press is the world's oldest publishing house, created in 1534 by the English King Henry VIII. It has published works by eminent historical figures such as Isaac Newton, John Milton, and Stephen Hawking, and has published more than 170 works by Nobel Prize winners. (UOG)



FERDIE DE LA TORRE

File photo shows Gov. Arnold I. Palacios.

Regarding the appointment of Myers, the governor said the statutory employment restriction of the Commonwealth Code that prohibits government employees from serving as a board member of CUC places an unburden as it limits the pool of otherwise qualified potential appointees from Rota. Accordingly, Palacios said, he is waiving such restriction.

Myers is the counsel for the Rota Casino Gaming. Palacios told Myers that he and Apatang are confident that

he is qualified and will be an asset to the CUC board.

Pertaining to the appointment of Sanchez, the governor said the nomination is to fill the requirement under the Commonwealth Code that a member of the CUC board shall be from off-island with utility management experience.

He said Sanchez's knowledge and skill as a member of Guam Consolidated Commission on Utilities will bring an invaluable skillset to CUC's board of directors. Palacios said he and Apatang are confident that Sanchez

is qualified and will be an asset to the CUC board.

Apatang told Sanchez that he and Apatang believe that he is qualified and will devote time and efforts to the best interest of CUC.

As for Igitol's nomination, Palacios said he and Apatang believe her membership on the MVA board is critical and her appointment will ensure consistency and continuity in fulfilling the goals and objectives of the MVA. Palacios said he and Apatang believe that Igitol will devote time and efforts to fostering a sustainable tourism industry.

With respect to the appointment of Manglona, Palacios said he and Apatang are confident that he is qualified and will be an asset to their administration.

Palacios said he and Apatang believe in Manglona's leadership in carrying out the office's constitutional mandate as they work toward integrating the administration's goals and objectives.

Manglona is a former director for the Northern Marianas Technical Institute Continuing Education and Workforce Development. He is also a director of the Cultural Maritime Training Center of non-profit group 500 Sails.

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

INVITATION FOR BIDS CUC-IFB-23-016

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF BACKHOES AND TRENCHER FOR THE ISLANDS OF SAIPAN, TINIAN AND ROTA

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the supply and delivery of five (5) backhoes and one (1) trencher for the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to assist with daily operations for the CUC Water and Wastewater systems.

This project is grant funded from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the Department of the Interior Office of Insular Affairs (DOI-OIA).

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-IFB-23-016, Supply and Delivery of Backhoes and Trencher for the Islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on March 7, 2023** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before submission deadline. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification should be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for goods. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on February 24, 2023, to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email manny.sablan@cucgov.org and Christie Sablan at christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in the said bids, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids submitted shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY	
MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG. PO BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950 PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500 / 1 FAX: (1-670) 234-5362 WEBSITE: WWW.CNMIIMPORTS.COM	
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL	
PROJECT NO. CPA-RFP-006-23	
FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES BY QUALIFIED AND EXPERIENCED FIRM(S) SERVICING THE AIRPORT INDUSTRY AND SPECIALIZING IN AIRPORT FINANCE RELATED REVENUE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT, AND PASSENGER FACILITY CHARGES	
<p>The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA), a public Corporation of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, hereby requests proposals from qualified and experienced firm(s) servicing the airport industry and specializing in airport finance, related revenue planning and development, and passenger facility charges. The Executive Director hereby determines that the use of an Invitation for Bid is neither practical nor advantageous to the CPA because the CPA wishes to acquire services and/or products that cannot be evaluated by price alone (NMIC § 40-50-225 (a)).</p> <p>The Proposal Package is available for pick-up beginning February 15, 2023, at the Office of the Executive Director, 2nd Floor, Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. Bidders must submit all required documents listed in the RFP Package. All responses to this RFP shall take into account any and/or all costs that will be charged the proposer awarded for this project. Proposers shall also take into consideration all necessary badging requirements and fees for this project.</p> <p>Questions regarding this procurement should be submitted in writing to Christopher S. Tenorio, Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, either by facsimile, or email cpa.receptionist@ptc.com with copy to skye.hofschneider@cnmimports.com or before March 09, 2023.</p> <p>All proposals shall be sealed and marked on the cover package outside as follows: "Professional Services to provide Airport Finance, Related Revenue Planning and Development, and Passenger Facility Charges, Project No. CPA-RFP-006-23". One (1) original and two (2) copies of the proposal must be submitted no later than 4:00 p.m. Local Time, March 20, 2023, to the Office of the Executive Director at the Saipan International Airport. Proposals submitted by facsimile (fax) transmission will not be considered. Any proposals received after the submittal deadline shall be rejected and returned unopened.</p> <p>The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted for: (a) any of the reasons set forth in this RFP; (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding bid/proposal rejection or cancellation; or (c) sufficient justification exists that awarding the proposal would not be in the best interest of CPA. The CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said proposals if in its sole opinion to do so would not be in CPA's best interest.</p> <p>All proposals shall become the property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority. This RFP shall be executed as per the CPA Procurement Regulations.</p> <p>FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY</p> <p>/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO Executive Director</p> <p>Date _____</p>	

Jury trial set for man who attempted to smuggle over 4 lbs of ‘ice’

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Superior Court has set a jury trial date for a man accused of smuggling over four lbs of methamphetamine or “ice” into the CNMI through the U.S. Postal Service.

Superior Court Associate

Judge Joseph N. Camacho has ordered CNMI Marshals to start issuing jury summons in the drug trafficking case against Zhang Yuzhu.

Zhang’s jury trial is set for March 27, at 9am.

Zhang, 48, is accused of attempting to smuggle by mail from California 4.9 lbs

of methamphetamine with a street value of approximately \$700,000.

Zhang is currently facing charges of importation of contraband, trafficking, and possession of a controlled substance. He has denied the charges.

Previously, Zhang asked

the court to suppress all evidence and statements obtained as a result of the search of his package, his detention, and the search of his vehicle without a warrant or other legal justification.

In a recent ruling, Camacho stated that the Customs officers’ warrantless search of

Zhang’s vehicle was unlawful.

The judge granted the defendant’s motion to suppress the evidence obtained from the search of the vehicle.

As for the search of the package, the judge said Zhang did not have a reasonable expectation of privacy in the package at the time of the search and that the Customs officers complied with their statutory jurisdiction requirements.

The court denied the defendant’s motion to suppress the

evidence obtained from the search of the package.

According to court documents, Zhang claims that an “unknown male” offered him \$100 to pick up a large parcel of chinaware at a Garapan postal service and bring it to the back of the Mobil gas station on Beach Road.

Zhang also stated that the \$4,239 in cash found in his vehicle was his, but not the 19 small clear plastic bags containing methamphetamine that weighed 26.3 grams.

Public warned of high surf, rip currents

A high surf advisory is in effect until 7am Friday along north facing reefs and there is a high risk of rip currents through Friday morning along north and east facing reefs. Also, a small craft advisory in effect until 7am Thursday.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam, large surf of 7 to 11 feet and dangerous rip currents are present in north and east reefs of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. These will create dangerous

swimming and surfing conditions and localized beach erosion. Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water.

Inexperienced swimmers should remain out of the water due to dangerous surf con-

ditions. The public is advised to stay out of the water along north and east facing reef lines. Swim near a lifeguard.

Conditions will also be hazardous to small craft. Inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid boating in hazardous conditions. (PR)

its past due fees.

“The Policy Regarding Airport Rates and Charges (78 FR 55330, September 10, 2013) Local Negotiation and Resolution Section 1.1.6 provides that any newly established fee or fee increase that is subject of a complaint under Title 49 USC 47129, that is not dismissed by the Secretary, must be paid to the airport proprietor under protest by the complainant. SMA should pay any past due fees to the airport as soon as possible to resolve any delinquent accounts on SMA’s part,” he said.

“United States code requires airports to, at a minimum, be as self-sustaining as possible when entering into new agreements or establishing rates, charges and fees,” he said.

Because of these findings, SMA has been instructed to resolve all delinquent accounts with CPA and to pay all

FAA action. This preliminary determination is not a final agency decision subject to judicial review. If you believe this office has erred, you may file a formal complaint under 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 16, Rules of Practice for Federally Assisted Airport Enforcement Proceedings,” said Armstrong.

According to data acquired from the CPA, as of Jan. 31, 2023, SMA owes CPA \$3,179,150.64 in fees.

In addition, SMA also owes CPA \$1,579,953.35 in interest, bringing the overall total balance to \$4,759,103.99.

The aviation fees included in CPA’s report dates back to February 2014.

SMA allegedly made its last partial payment in May 2015.

side the expensive whiskey may have kept its value.”

Available items for the upcoming auction can be viewed and bid on at gamingequipmentauction.com.

Originally published by Inside Asian Gaming. See original post on <https://www.asgam.com/index.php/2023/02/28/proceeds-from-sale-of-imperial-pacific-casino-equipment-now-above-us1-million-as-latest-auction-looms/>

It hasn’t all been clear sailing for the receiver, though, with Shepherd lamenting a constant battle with thieves stealing copper wire from the casino building.

“IPI pays for a skeleton security staff who must accompany us as we work through the assets, and when they have to run around the casino chasing burglars it means we can’t do our work and we have to leave the casino,” he explained.

cifics, Tobon said in the last few weeks, there has been a large volume of mail parcels containing “ice” entering the Marianas.

The task force, in collaboration with local authorities, continue to investigate the origins and receivers of these parcels.

Most of the parcels contain drugs that were shipped from the United States.

“We’ve seen an increase in the amount of methamphetamine that has been reaching the Marianas. Within the last couple of weeks, we have seen an increase in the number of mail parcels containing methamphetamine entering the Marianas and we have a

couple of ongoing investigations into those particular packages. We are working hand in hand with the local authorities,” Tobon said.

Tobon explained that the task force primarily aids the Marianas by providing additional resources needed to adequately carry out investigations into transnational crimes like drug trafficking.

“What this particular task force offers is the ability for us to bring in additional resources to ensure that our personnel as well as our partners have all the resources they need to combat issues like methamphetamine trafficking but also financial crimes, cybercrimes, and all the type

of criminal activity on a transnational level,” he said.

“The other benefit of this task force is that we bring different folks to the table because we know there’s a large threat of transnational crimes in the Marianas; some trafficking, both labor and sex, that is occurring. This is not just an anti-drug task force, it’s an anti-transnational organized crime task force,” he added.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang met with visiting Homeland Security Investigations officials two weeks ago to talk about the new Mariana Islands Border Enforcement Security Task Force in cooperation with the CNMI and Guam.

available because of lack of internet services and the termination of all CCC staff, including executive director Andrew Yeom.

Aside from DeLeon Guerrero, present at the meeting were vice chair Rafael S. Demapan and commissioners Ramon M. Dela Cruz, Mariano Taitano, and Martin T. Mendiola.

Mendiola joined the meeting online. Former CCC staff Ruth Ann P. Sakisat volunteered as secretary to assist the commissioners in the meeting.

DeLeon Guerrero said the commissioners are still mandated by law and by its own regulation to meet at least once a month.

The chairman said he asked all board members to just meet and that they are not talking about payday and are just talking about doing a regulatory mandate.

He said they will then figure out what to do as they are in the middle of litigations and arbitration with IPI.

“It’s not a good time to throw in the towel and walk away. For some, it’s the easiest way to do that. ...Enough of this stuff, move on. For us, we’re in the middle of battle,” DeLeon Guerrero said.

He said it is never recommended anywhere in the world to walk away in the middle of a battle.

The chairman underscored the need to enforce collection of funds from IPI that is due based on the casino license agreement.

“So this is for the Commonwealth. This is an effort to collect revenues for the retirees. This is an effort to generate revenue,” DeLeon Guerrero said.

He said they have always attempted to make sure that they do the right thing.

Regardless of all the criticism leveled against CCC, DeLeon Guerrero said they are still maintaining focus and doing what is proper and right.

He said that, once an open and honest discussion is held with Palacios, Apatang, and lawmakers, then maybe there is hope that this casino industry can have a brighter future and it can be done.

FAA

From page 1

Back in January 2022, SMA sent out an informal complaint to the FAA accusing CPA of unilaterally imposing new rates in October 2021 and that CPA allegedly violated its federal obligation to impose reasonable rates and charges pursuant to FAA policy regarding airport rates and charges.

According to a letter issued by FAA’s Brian Armstrong to SMA president Shaun Christian, the FAA has determined that CPA did not violate its grant obligations as it relates to reasonableness of the fees CPA charges.

Specifically, the FAA found that there is no federal reg-

AUCTION

From page 1

out, but we still have about 350 slot machines and electronic table games and various sundry assets such as CCTV to sell in the next 3 auctions,” Shepherd said.

IAG understands total proceeds from the first three auctions stands at almost \$1.2 million, which will be used to pay judgment creditors.

DRUGS

From page 1

recently established Mariana Islands Border Enforcement Security Task Force was created due to the high volume of methamphetamine-related cases seen in the Marianas.

“The reason we brought in the task force to the CNMI is because we saw a large increase in the amount of transnational crimes in the Marianas, primarily [related to] methamphetamine. The use has been increasing within the Marianas. This has been something we’ve been tracking for many years,” he said.

Without giving any spe-

CPA chair: Competition is healthy for interisland travel

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Responding to recent issues surrounding Marianas Southern Airway that may lead to the loss of another interisland service provider, Commonwealth Ports Authority board chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds said that competition is good as it regulates airfare and provides CNMI resi-

dents with options.

Although CPA was not involved in the discussions between the CNMI government and MSA, CPA is and has been in support of an additional inter island air service provider, King-Hinds said.

"CPA was not involved in the discussion between MSA and the government but welcomed the new entry to the market and the new service

that MSA provided, especially to the people of Rota and Tinian, who frequent the interisland commute, whether it be for medical reasons, work, or leisure," she said.

King-Hinds explained that competition is healthy as it regulates airfare and provides the community with options.

"We do not control the fares that the airlines set. The market ultimately regulates that

through competition. Competition is healthy as it can result in lower prices and better service because it gives people options," she said.

In addition, the CPA chair pointed out that MSA came into the picture at a time when the CNMI was in dire need of interisland air service.

Interisland air service was suspended for a brief period when Star Marianas, who pre-

viously held the monopoly in the industry, could not resolve its issues with CPA, from whom it owes over \$3 million in fees to date.

The cessation of flights heavily impacted the Tinian and Rota communities so the entry of another commuter airline was welcomed at the time as a resolution to the issue.

"Back in early December of 2021, SMA suspended interisland services due to what they cited as an 'unhealthy flight environment.' There were so many people that were stranded on Saipan, especially people from Rota, who were here for medical purposes and who ended up relying on the goodwill of friends and family to accommodate their unexpected prolonged stay. We were inundated with phone calls from elected officials and private citizens, asking CPA for help because not only were folks from Tinian and Rota stuck on Saipan, there were many who couldn't get the critical health care they needed here on Saipan, lab specimens were collected but not being sent, Domestic Violence perpetrators were being

released back into the homes they just terrorized because Tinian and Rota DPS does not have the facility to hold arrestees for more than 24 hours. The impact of the flight cessation was immediate and real to these communities and that created an opportunity for someone else to enter the market," King-Hinds said.

"To be clear, CPA cannot get involved in discussions about subsidy to any one particular airline. We have to treat all airlines the same. Which was why when we received federal assistance, we gave a break to all airlines because we saw the devastation that the pandemic had on the industry," she added.

To date, the issue between CPA and SMA has yet to be resolved and it is uncertain whether it will be, since SMA still currently owes CPA roughly \$3.1 million in fees and over \$1.5 million in interest dating all the way back to 2014.

The option of a competing interisland air service ensures that the communities of Rota and Tinian do not suffer the same tragedy faced back in 2021.



GMS Over 150 parents were in attendance for the Green Meadow School's first-ever Parents Summit at the Royal Taga Hall of Saipan World Resort last Monday, Feb. 23, 2023.

GMS celebrates parents with summit at Saipan World Resort

Green Meadow School hosted a night dedicated to giving back to parents last Monday, Feb. 23, 2023, in GMS' first-ever Parents Summit at the Royal Taga Hall of Saipan World Resort.

Over 150 parents were in attendance for the evening that had several speakers with relevant presentations for today's parents, performances by parent leaders and GMS faculty and staff, and an awarding ceremony recognizing the parent, teacher and student assembly officers and class representatives.

The speakers included former Education Commissioner Dr. Rita Sablan, Department of Youth Services' Maria Olopai, Northern Marianas College's Dr. Beylul Solomon, and Public School System's behavior specialist Dr. Tai Doram.

Covering the topic of digital technologies, Sablan shared the important role of parents where the presence of technological devices is constantly growing. Their role does not solely focus on control of technology, but increased understanding, family engage-

ment and ultimately ensuring that the entire family is using technology responsibly.

Olopai presented on the Family & Youth Enhancement Program, a multi-faceted program that consists of different activities and programs targeted toward youth and parents. One such facet being the intervention and prevention services, which consist of multiweek programs for youths ages 11 to 21. Her presentation also showcased the afterschool and summer school program activities.

Solomon, an associate professor at NMC's School of Education, presented academic and mental outcomes in the CNMI. Data, collected from DYS, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., and other agencies, showed a decline in mental health and academic test results in the past few years. Solomon's research sought to teach parents about the link between those suffering from poor mental health and highlighted the importance of recognizing the cultural roots of the CNMI.

Doram, or "Coach Tai", presented on the topic of So-

cial Emotional Health. SE Health is defined when one knows "that they are cared for and loved. That they are esteemed and valued; belongs to a network of communication and mutual obligation." Doram touched on various ways to acknowledge one's SE health, what factors affect it, the impacts of good and bad SE health and a number of strategies and perspectives on maintaining/improving ones SE health.

The night was not without entertainment, the band Sessionistas played as the attendees enjoyed dinner. A special number was presented by parent leaders Gemma Pamintuan and Anastasia Palma. GMS faculty and staff had a special performance in the dark with UV lights illuminating the white gloves of the performers as they created shapes and symbols to show their appreciation to all those in attendance.

To conclude the event, PTSAs officers and classroom representatives were awarded with certificates of appreciation for their continued support to the GMS faculty, staff and administrators. (PR)



CNMI DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE



PUBLIC NOTICE

The CNMI Department of Commerce, Central Statistics Division is preparing to conduct the CNMI 2023 Prevailing Wage Study (PWS) survey to begin on March 01, 2023 and notifies all businesses and employers in the CNMI to log on to the CSD Data Collection Portal and complete the PWS survey questionnaire.

All businesses and employers (Private & Public), with and with no employees, are urged to complete this survey before March 15, 2023.

Data Collection Portal Link:
<http://cnmidata.commerce.gov.mp>

Customs seeks SNILD's help in securing \$20K for fuel for 2 boats

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_deletorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Division of Customs Bi-osecurity has requested the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation to appropriate \$20,000 to pay for the fuel of its two maritime enforcement boats.

In his letter to SNILD chair

Rep. John Paul Sablan (Ind-Saipan) dated Feb. 9, 2023, division director Jose C. Mafnas underscored the importance of maintaining the security of CNMI seaports and borders, saying the Division of Customs and Bi-osecurity is responsible for



ensuring the safety and security of the CNMI's borders, including the waters around the seaports. These two CBS boats, he said, are essential tools in fulfilling that responsibility and require a constant supply of fuel to remain operational.

"Unfortunately, the current budget constraints have made it difficult for us to maintain a steady supply of fuel for these

two boats," Mafnas said.

The director said he understands the importance of being fiscally responsible,

but that he firmly believes the safety and security of the community should always be a top priority.

March as Women's Month begins with proclamation signing

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystral_marino@saipantribune.com
Correspondent

The CNMI Women's Association, along with the Office of the Governor's Women's Affairs Office, is inviting the community to attend the signing of a proclamation designating March 2023 as CNMI's Women's Month. The signing is to take place 2:30pm today at the American Memorial Park's indoor theater.

The organizations are focusing this year on "WELLNESS," an acronym to mean Women Entrepreneurs Leading Life and Nourishing Economic Sustainable Solutions. Women's Affairs Office's special adviser Shirley Ogu-moro, and CWA's president Cecilia Taitano will be among the speakers at today's ceremony, which will be

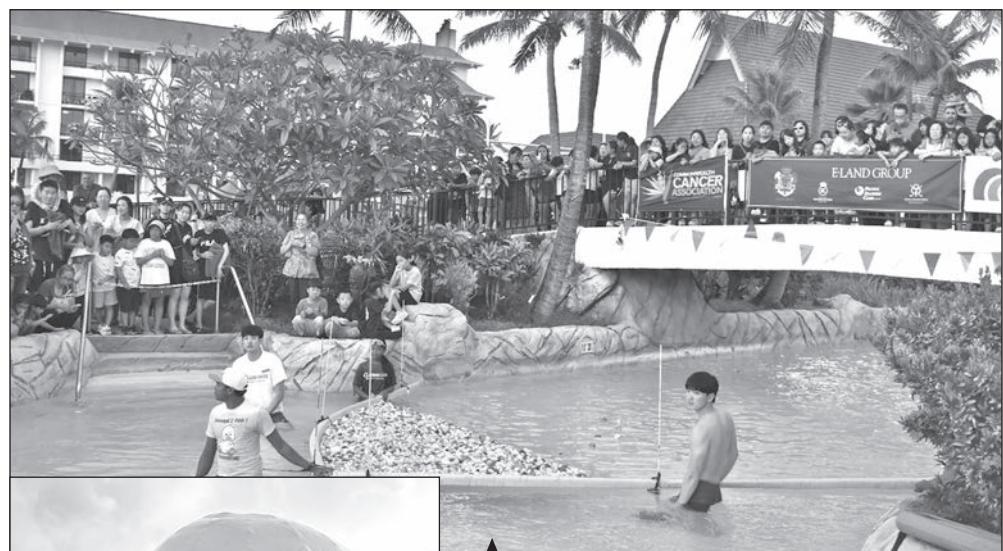
concluded with the governor signing the proclamation.

When speaking to CWA project director, Valentina Rivera, she explained a little more on the chosen theme of the year "We want women in the CNMI to lead life in a healthy, proactive environment in their own lives; but also [we wanted] in a sense to sort of reiterate what we've been doing these past few months, including late last year, which is economic sustainability, in a sense where women should take charge of their finances or like their dreams to be economically viable, and independently. ...We can empower other women as much as we can, we can put out that message like, 'Hey, we have this, we have that,' and all that messaging, but really at the end

of it all, it's based solely on that one woman."

Rivera added "So I think our message right now is like sort of have a consistency in what you want to do. So let's say if you want to be a business owner, you have your dream business, or even dream job; go for that and be consistent in what you want, because in the end of it all, it's you, and not other women hyping you. It's about proclaiming to the world that you have your life and you control it and you're going to get what you want. ...Do what you feel you need to do to make your life healthy and happy and to go for your dreams because in the end it's only just you..."

CWA and the Women's Affairs Office are inviting the community to take part in the event.



DUCK RACE FOR CANCER

LEIGH GASES

Participants and supporters of the Pacific Islands Club Saipan's Duck Race for Cancer wait at the finish line of the Lazy River for the Top 4 winners of the race last Friday night. Rocelle Tenorio won \$2,023 as her rubber duck raced to first place, followed by Jasmin Ngirmekur's duck for second place and \$500; third place for \$200 was Ha'ani Diaz's duck; and fourth place was Alex Domingo's duck for \$50.



SWIM RELAY WINNERS

LEIGH GASES

Taiyo Akimaru, right and Jakey Deleon Guerrero, left, were the first-place winners of the two-man Swim Relay of the Pacific Islands Club Saipan's Duck Race for Cancer last Friday night. They both won a PIC Explorer's Membership worth around \$1,000.

Free webinars on federal contracting

The Guam Procurement Technical Assistance Center is offering free webinars this March.

Webinars are held every Thursday from 10am to 11:30am via Zoom. Zoom links are emailed to all registered attendees 30 minutes before the webinar.

■ March 2, 2023 – How to Get HUBZone Certified
– All of Guam and the CNMI are HUBZones. The Guam PTAC will take you through the certification process, the required supporting documents, and follow-up requirements from SBA.

■ March 9, 2023 – How to Get 8(a) Certified – The 8(a) program is a business

development program for companies owned by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. The Guam PTAC will discuss eligibility, the online application, and follow-up documentation.

■ March 16, 2023 – How to Get WOSB Certified

– The Women-Owned Small Business program encourages women to pursue Federal contracts in historically male dominated industries. We will discuss the online certification process as well as supporting document requirements.

■ March 23, 2023 – Mentor-Protégé Programs

– SBA and DOD Mentor-Protégé programs allow small businesses to team up

with large businesses without running afoul of affiliation regulations. The Guam PTAC will update you on the eligibility requirements, the application process, and follow-up requirements for both programs.

■ March 30, 2023 – How to Get SDVOSB Certified

– SBA recently took over Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Certification from the VA. The Guam PTAC will update you on the eligibility requirements, the application process, and follow-up requirements for SBA's newest certification.

Register at [\(PR\)](https://www.guamptac.com/news-and-events.php)

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

MHS PTSA meeting today

Be in the know! The 3rd quarter Marianas High School PTSA meeting will be held today, March 1, 2023, beginning at 5:30pm in the MHS main cafeteria. We invite all parents and families to join us for updates on the status of the PTSA incorporation, school announcements, and graduation plans.

The meeting will be also be streamed live on the school's official Facebook page at www.facebook.com/

MHS Mighty Dolphins (PR)

4.9-magnitude quake in Marianas region

At 11:35am on Feb. 27, 2023, a report of a 4.9-magnitude earthquake occurred at 17.390°N 147.530°E in the Pagan region of the Northern Mariana Islands. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000. (PR)

4.8-magnitude quake in Pagan region

At 9:33am on Feb. 27, 2023, a report of a 4.8-magnitude earthquake occurred at 18.742°N 145.487°E in the Pagan region of the Northern Mariana Islands. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000. (PR)



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Department of Community and Cultural Affairs



Caller Box 10007, Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950
Tel: (670) 664-2587 Fax: (670) 664-2571

CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT FUND (CCDF) PROGRAM 2023 SUMMER PROGRAM GRANT

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Program announces an opportunity for non-profit, community-based organizations including faith based non-profit organizations to participate in the 2023 CCDF Summer Program Grant. This grant is open to organizations that offer Summer Programs to all school-aged children between the ages 6 to 12 years old. For this grant, a total of five (5) awards will be provided- 3 for Saipan, 1 for Tinian, and 1 for Rota. CCDF has the right to award smaller grant awards as appropriate. 2023 CCDF Summer Program Grant Application Packets maybe picked up at the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Program Office, Building No. 1344 Ascension Court, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950 beginning February 8, 2023.

Interested applicants should submit two (2) original hard copies and one (1) copy in a flash drive of the completed application and requirements, sealed and marked: 2023 CCDF Summer Program Grant Application. Attention: Esther Wabol, CCDF Administrative Assistant. All applications must be stamped and received by the CCDF Office (including those coming from Rota and Tinian) no later than March 24, at 2:00 p.m. Incomplete applications will not be accepted and will be returned.

CCDF will only accept written inquiries regarding this grant opportunity and should be addressed to Maribel Loste, CCDF Director on or before **February 17, 2023**. Inquiries submitted after this date will not be entertained. Inquiries maybe sent via:

1. Hard copy with subject heading: **Questions 2023 CCDF Summer Program Grant** and submitted to the CCDF Office Bldg. No. 1344 Ascension Court Capitol Hill or
2. Email at mloste.ccdf@childcare.gov.mp with the subject heading: **Questions 2023 CCDF Summer Program Grant**

Responses to the inquiries will be posted on childcare.gov.mp website with Title: Responses to the 2023 CCDF Summer Program Grant and will be posted on or before February 28, 2023.

/S/
Maribel Loste, M.A.
CCDF Director

/S/
Vivian T. Sablan
Acting DCCA Secretary



Kids learn to make paper-folded canoe replicas



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Participants show off the outrigger canoes they made using basic paper-based construction materials during an activity at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library's Children of Our Homeland Center last Saturday, Feb. 18, 2023.

The Joeten-Kiyu Public Library's Children of Our Homeland Center—also known as the Children's Library—was teeming with excitement last Saturday, Feb. 18, 2023, as children learned about how to make an outrigger canoe using basic paper-based construction materials.

The three-hour-long cultural class featured visual artist, master artisan, local Chamorro historian, experimental archaeologist, and public lecturer Noel Noah Borja Quitugua, who taught the importance of outrigger canoes in ancient Chamorro society for children ages 9 years and older.

More than 30 participants gained knowledge on the art of paper folding methods used for constructing paddling canoes using basic materials such as index paper, bamboo sticks, and paper templates.

Library director Erlinda C. Naputi acknowledged the Northern Marianas Humanities Council for the American Sātba – Ammalaw Program for providing the necessary funding for this cultural class. She also thanked House Speaker Edmund Villagomez (Ind-Saipan), Rep. Ralph Yumul (Ind-Saipan), Rep. Jonathan Attao (Ind-Saipan), and Rep. Vincent Aldan (Ind-Saipan) for donating water for the participants.

"When an opportunity presented itself to have



instructor Noel Quitugua conduct a cultural class at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, it was truly an honor to share his wealth of historical and cultural knowledge about the CNMI to our patrons. Thank you, senot Noel Quitugua for masterfully sharing your knowledge to perpetuate our indigenous culture at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library," Naputi said.

As part of Chamorro and Carolinian Mother Language Day, the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library launched a special cultural display using library items from the Pacific Room. The JKPL's Pacific Room contains more than 5,000 library items—artifacts, books, periodicals, magazines, DVDs, CDs, posters, ephemera, etc. about the Marianas and Micronesia. JKPL displayed a special exhibit in the COHL's

stage with outrigger canoes, while posters filled with cultural artifacts were displayed on informational panels surrounding event participants. A replica of an ancient Chamorro outrigger canoe created by Noel Quitugua was also prominently featured.

Some of the feedback from the class said: "This class was super cool! We got to make a real-life paddling canoe model. This is the best cultural class ever. We want more. I learned about the ancient Chamorro outrigger canoe."

"I enjoyed this class hands down."

"Awesome job!"

"Very detailed template! Again, he's an artist!"

"[These] activities for kids are a must."

"This is the first time I have ever made a canoe using these methods at the library. Thank you." (PR)



The Joeten-Kiyu Public Library's Children of Our Homeland Center was teeming with excitement last Saturday, Feb. 18, 2023, as children learned about how to make an outrigger canoe using basic paper-based construction materials under the guidance of Noel Noah Borja Quitugua.



NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION



P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514 | Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp | Website: http://www.nmhgov.net

PUBLIC NOTICE

03/01/2023

Notice for Public Comment

Reprogramming of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds

Program Year/ IDIS No.:	Program:	Activity Name:	Subrecipient:	Approved Budget:	Proposed Reprogramming Amount:	Proposed Revised Project Budget:	Current IDIS Funded Amount:
IDIS# 733	CDBG	Purchase of Personal Protective Equipment for DFEMS	Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services	\$644,160.80	(\$9,316.80)	0	\$644,160.80
2016	CDBG	PY2016 Unobligated Funds Available to commit			(\$13,216.45)		
2018	CDBG	PY 2018 Unobligated Funds Available to Commit			(\$14,972.43)		
2019	CDBG	PY2019 Unobligated Funds Available to Commit			(\$24,914.28)		
2020	CDBG	PY2020 Unobligated Funds Available to Commit			(\$15,157.50)		
IDIS#715	CDBG	Kagman Community Park, Phase 2 Project	\$245,000.00	(\$66,690.00)	\$178,310.00	\$245,000.00	
IDIS#763	CDBG	Renovation of Tinian Little League Baseball Field	\$330,000.00	(\$75,000.00)	\$255,000.00	\$330,000.00	
IDIS#757	CDBG	Outdoor Fitness Court Facility (Rota)	\$115,166.40	(\$115,166.40)	0	\$115,166.40	
Total Reprogrammed to Activities:					(\$334,433.86)		
IDIS# 756	CDBG	Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan Multi-Purpose Facility	\$195,000.00	(\$45,520.00)	\$240,520.00	\$195,000.00	
IDIS# 758	CDBG	Outdoor Fitness Court Facility (Tinian)	\$115,166.40	(\$94,833.60)	\$210,000.00	\$115,166.40	
IDIS# 764	CDBG	Rehabilitation of the Sinapalo Youth Center	\$123,100.00	(\$36,900)	\$160,000.00	\$123,100.00	
IDIS# 765	CDBG	Rehabilitation of the Sinapalo Basketball Court	\$20,000.00	(\$20,000.00)	\$40,000.00	\$20,000.00	
NEW	CDBG	Demolition of Perilous Structures (Rota)	Municipality of Rota		(\$137,180.26)		
Total Reprogrammed to Activities:					(\$334,433.86)		

Our agency through its Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) publishes a "Public Notice" on reprogramming funds over \$100,001.00. Therefore, comments from the general public should be submitted to NMHC Central Office located in Garapan, Saipan, and in Rota and Tinian Field Offices, on or before April 03, 2023 no later than 4:30 P.M. You may contact Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director or Ms. Tricia Tenorio, Planner @ (670)234-6866/9447

Opinion

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

The absurd and asinine cleansing of Roald Dahl's work

Like the rest of the sane universe, we couldn't believe the gall of Puffin U.K. when word came out that the publishing house and the Roald Dahl Story Co., the entity that manages his work, had conspired to make hundreds of changes to the writers' iconic books.

After sensitivity readers flagged language as objectionable, the Oompa Loompas in Willy Wonka's chocolate factory aren't "small men" anymore; they're now "small people." The chickens in "Fantastic Mr. Fox" are no longer "stupid." Augustus Gloop isn't "fat"; now he's "enormous" (that's better?). In "The Twits," a language referred to as a "weird African language" is now simply an "African language." In "The BFG," the description of a character as having "reddish-brown" skin is now gone. In "The Witches," a sentence is added: "There are plenty of other reasons why women might wear wigs and there is certainly nothing wrong with that."

Because these novels would still say "By Roald Dahl" on the covers, this is nothing more than putting words in—and taking them out of—a dead man's mouth.

A play or movie or TV show or graphic novel or theme park ride based on Dahl is free to take liberties. Nor are we opposed to creators producing works for multiple audiences. With J.K. Rowling's permission, the Harry Potter books use some different language in their U.K. and U.S. editions. We know of at least one girl who enjoys "New York State of Mind" with the clean, rather than the explicit, lyrics.

But in free and democratic society, paintings are not painted over—no matter how far out of favor those artists have fallen. Mark Twain put the N-word in "Huckleberry Finn" very much on purpose; to remove it now is both to miss the point and to sanitize history.

Friday, in an attempt to quell the furor, Dahl's craven publisher said it would release the original stories as a "Classic Collection" alongside the updated editions. We'd recommend adding a trigger warning: The pages can cause paper cuts.

HAFADAL
MAKESMITH
VANCEAGEN 2023

Jimmy Carter's presidency looks better now than in 1980. Is there a lesson for Joe Biden?

History isn't kind to one-term presidents, at least in the short run.

For most of the last 40 years, Jimmy Carter's presidency has been widely remembered as an epic failure, the cautionary tale of a politician who was soundly rejected by voters when he sought a second term in 1980.

Happily for Carter, 98, who entered hospice care this month, his reputation has since risen, thanks to his admirable post-presidency and biographies that have reassessed his record more favorably.

Carter's presidency, they argue, was better than it looked. He enacted historic environmental legislation, including the first federal funding for renewable energy. He deregulated airlines, making air travel more affordable. He made human rights a central theme of U.S. diplomacy and negotiated landmark peace accords between Israel and Egypt.

But by the time he sought reelection, inflation had soared past 12%, the economy was heading toward recession and voters wanted a change.

After his loss to Ronald Reagan, Carter was a prophet without honor, even in his own party. He was uninvited to Democratic conventions and rarely mentioned by his successors.

Joe Biden witnessed all of it up close. In 1976, Biden, then 33, was a thoroughgoing Jimmy Carter Democrat. He was the first U.S. senator to endorse the former Georgia governor's presidential candidacy. He backed Carter again in 1980, when the then-president faced a bruising primary against the more liberal Sen. Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts.

What lessons did Carter's tenure teach Biden, who was already thinking about running for president?

First, politics is important, beginning with managing your own party's coalition. Carter failed spectacularly on that score. He disdained bargaining with members of Congress and often didn't even return their calls.

"Carter thought politics was sinful," his vice president, Walter Mondale, said. "The worst thing you could say to Carter if you wanted him to do something was that it was politically the best thing to do."

Even as a first-term senator, Biden saw that was a problem.

"The president is learning, but not fast enough," he said in 1977. "Nixon had his enemies list and President Carter has his friends list. I guess I'm on his friends list, and I don't know which is worse."

When Carter ran into trouble, he was left with few allies. Democrats in Congress helped kill several of his top legislative priorities, including health care and tax reform bills.

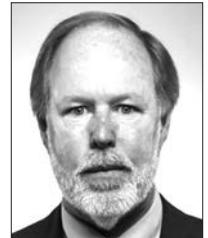
Biden is the opposite—a relentless schmoozer who began his 2020 presidential campaign by knitting his party's moderate and progressive wings together.

In his first two years as president, Biden focused on managing unruly Democratic majorities in Congress and passed major bills

BY DOYLE MCMANUS

Los Angeles Times

Doyle McManus is a columnist for the Los Angeles Times. Readers may send him email at doyle.mcmanus@latimes.com.



on climate change, infrastructure spending and semiconductor production.

Second, Carter's troubles reaffirmed an ancient political truism: In an election year, the economy—especially inflation—trumps every other issue.

Carter signed landmark legislation, but once voters encountered gasoline shortages and inflation soaring above 12%, none of it seemed to matter.

He responded to economic crisis by proposing an austerity budget and appointing an inflation hawk, Paul A. Volcker, to run the Federal Reserve. Volcker pushed interest rates up to 20%, which eventually tamed inflation. But by then, Carter was a private citizen back in Plains, Georgia.

Biden is presumably hoping his Fed chair, Jerome H. Powell, will be gentler as he tries to steer the economy to a soft landing before the 2024 election.

Meanwhile, the president isn't embracing Carter-style austerity. Instead, he's touting his administration's spending on infrastructure and manufacturing jobs.

A third lesson from Carter's fall: Foreign policy success may not help a president's reelection prospects, but foreign policy failures will hurt.

Carter concluded a major nuclear arms agreement with the Soviet Union, normalized diplomatic relations with China and negotiated the Camp David accords, ending the threat of major war between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

But when he ran for reelection in 1980, the only international issue that mattered to most voters was Iran's seizure of 52 American hostages, a problem Carter failed to solve.

Afterward, Carter said he was "one helicopter short" of winning, a reference to the mission's failure. His loss had many causes, but that episode probably doomed his chances.

Biden's biggest foreign policy success—his leadership of a coalition opposing Russia's invasion of Ukraine—doesn't appear to have bolstered his approval ratings; they've been stuck around 43% for the last six months.

But at least Ukraine has displaced the public's memory of the botched U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021.

If Biden does run for a second term, as he says he intends, Carter's life may offer one more lesson: The voters' verdict isn't always the last word—win or lose.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

History forecasts an inevitable major war

Our future is foreshadowed by our past, and few human activities have shaped our history more than our near-irresistible compulsion to fight each other. War is as characteristic of humanity as religion and the drive to procreate.

At our best, we aspire to beat our swords into plowshares and our spears into pruning hooks. Religion has generally made a virtue of peace. History is replete with organizations that have campaigned against war in the abstract. Even now, the aptly named British-based MAW (Movement for the Abolition of War) asserts that war is not inevitable and imagines its eradication.

Whether the admirable goals of these efforts were ever actually realistic is not as important as the regrettable fact that they have manifestly failed. The scent of war is in the air, and it's growing stronger. And as much as we may hate it, we cannot ignore it.

We sometimes speak of "just" and "unjust" wars. Unjust wars contain subcategories: wars that are "ill advised," "based on misinformation" or "just plain stupid." Unfortunately, we usually make these judgments only in retrospect, long after great resources and many lives have been wasted.

But history doesn't run in retrospect, and the current war in Ukraine lies before us. Locally, the war is about territory and sovereignty. Globally, the stakes are much higher. It's not unduly idealistic to characterize the war as a showdown between authoritarianism and democracy, between tyranny and freedom. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zel-

The scent of war is in the air, and it's growing stronger. And as much as we may hate it, we cannot ignore it.

enskyy has said that the West must choose between these polar opposites.

Thus far, the West has chosen. The United States, NATO and the European Union have engineered a calibrated response that, combined with Ukrainian courage and will, has brought the war to a precarious stalemate.

The stalemate is unlikely to last, however, and although the Biden administration has committed to standing behind Ukraine for "as long as it takes," there's no guarantee that a Republican-controlled House—or many ordinary Americans, for that matter—will be willing to maintain this level of support.

In fact, polls and prominent Republicans—House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, former president Donald Trump, presidential aspirant Ron DeSantis—have shown signs of waning support for Ukraine. Concerns about the war are legitimate. But much of this equivocation reflects

domestic politics: Many Republicans would rather see Joe Biden lose in Ukraine than Vladimir Putin.

But before we bail on Ukraine, consider two stark facts:

First, there are "good guys" and "bad guys" in this global conflict. We are on the side of the "good guys." I'm wary of the term "exceptional" to describe our nation. It sounds like bragging, the sort of thing that other people should say about us, rather than what we should say about ourselves.

But despite our flaws and failures our system of governance is far superior to Russia's, China's, Iran's, Saudi Arabia's, Hungary's or that of any of the burgeoning autocracies in the world.

By JOHN M. CRISP

Tribune News Service

John M. Crisp, an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service, lives in Texas and can be reached at jcristpcolumns@gmail.com.



Unfortunately, autocracy and tyranny are the historical default, and maintaining an exceptional democratic nation in a dangerous world requires positive action.

Second, positive action in defense of democracy often requires force. The last war that we could reasonably call a "good war" was World War II, the worldwide struggle to defend Western values—freedom, individual rights, equality, self-governance—from Nazi Germany and an imperialist Japan.

The war in Ukraine is that same struggle, writ small.

Do not mistake me for a hawk. I came of age in a generation that made an anthem out of "All we are saying ... is give peace a chance." But the growing conflict between freedom and tyranny is unlikely to be resolved peacefully. The fact that the major opponents in this conflict have nuclear weapons makes our prospects unimaginably dangerous. A major war would be catastrophic. Nevertheless, this is a war that the West cannot afford to lose.

One hopes for a diplomatic resolution in Ukraine and in the larger conflict. History suggests otherwise.

In fact, we often say that those who forget history are doomed to repeat it.

Unfortunately, even those who remember history are often doomed to repeat it, as well.

Teenage mental health crisis: The kids are not OK

Recently, my suicidal 15-year-old grandson ingested and smoked a cocktail of several drugs. His loving parents found him nonresponsive, with a heart rate near 200 beats per minute. The emergency responders and doctors saved his life. Sadly, it was not his first attempt.

He is now a ward of the state, deemed a danger to himself, and awaits a bed in a facility. Apparently, beds are hard to come by because so many American teenagers—the ones for whom we prescribe many pacifying drugs—are in need of treatment.

I have two friends whose sons have died by suicide. I bet you know someone too. Your son. Your daughter. Maybe your own grandson.

A recent Washington Post article, "Teen girls 'engulfed' in violence and trauma, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention finds," examines an 89-page report from the CDC on American teens' behaviors and experiences related to health and well-being. The CDC found that "as we saw in the 10 years before the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health among students overall continues to worsen, with more than 40% of high school students feeling so sad or hopeless that they could not engage in their regular activities for at least two weeks during the previous year—a possible indication of the experience of depressive symptoms. We also saw significant increases in the percentage of youth who seriously considered suicide, made a suicide plan, and attempted suicide."

Teen girls and LGBTQ teens are especially at risk. The CDC reports that "60% of female students experienced persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness during the past year and nearly 25% made a suicide plan. ... Close to 70% of LGBQ+ students experienced persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness during the past year and more than 50% had poor mental health during the past 30 days. Almost 25% attempted suicide during the past year."

Should we blame these alarming statistics on the pandem-

ic—the lack of in-classroom learning and in-person socializing with friends during those years? Isolation is never conducive to mental health. Uncertainty about the future is another contributing factor.

In October 2021, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the Children's Hospital Association declared a national emergency in children's mental health, citing the serious toll of the pandemic on top of other challenges.

"Young people have endured so much throughout this pandemic and while much of the attention is often placed on its physical health consequences, we cannot overlook the escalating mental health crisis facing our patients," then-AAP President Lee Savio Beers said.

The organizations cite a pre-pandemic statistic: "Before the pandemic, rates of childhood mental health concerns and suicide had been rising steadily for at least a decade. By 2018, suicide was the second leading cause of death for youths ages 10-24 years."

Certainly, that is one reason, but I think there is a broader problem at hand, one that is perhaps less quantifiable. The teen years are confusing physically and emotionally. One is neither quite an adult nor still a child. As a kid in 1970s Chicago, I do remember that bewildering stage. But there were differences. Drugs, especially prescription medications, were not as pervasive as today. The stronger strains of cannabis now legal in the majority of the country were still illegal everywhere. Firearms were not easily obtained. As a consequence, school shootings were practically nonexistent. School was a safe space.

And, for me anyway, I was so excited about the endless possibilities that awaited me after high school. I couldn't wait to get out on my own and put my stamp on the world.

Hope is a drug unto itself. Luckily, I had an ample supply. But what today's teens face in this broken world is the opposite of

By STEPHEN J. LYONS

Chicago Tribune

Stephen J. Lyons is the author of five books of essays and journalism, including Going Driftless and West of East.



hope: a climate in turmoil; a culture of guns and more guns; daily mass shootings; an economic hierarchy that is far from fair; and a failed, underfunded mental health policy that instead of healing funnels our youth into the prison industrial complex.

All of us, teenagers and elders alike, are besieged by our own violent nature. Drugs and guns. Bombs and rubble. Rebuild and destroy. Destroy and rebuild. Although we are divided in our red versus blue politics and the never-ending culture wars, we are united by the anxiety that trickles down through all of us. We are uncertain. About everything, it seems.

My grandson was ultimately released from the hospital and sent home to his parents. No beds were available in any of the adolescent mental facilities. The deadly concoction of stimulants had been flushed out of his young system, and he was declared "stable," ready to reenter high school, where he easily obtained the drugs that are traded among his peers. He refuses to go to an inpatient drug rehab facility, and he lives in a state where he has that right.

His parents' goal is simply to keep him alive, no matter what and against all odds.

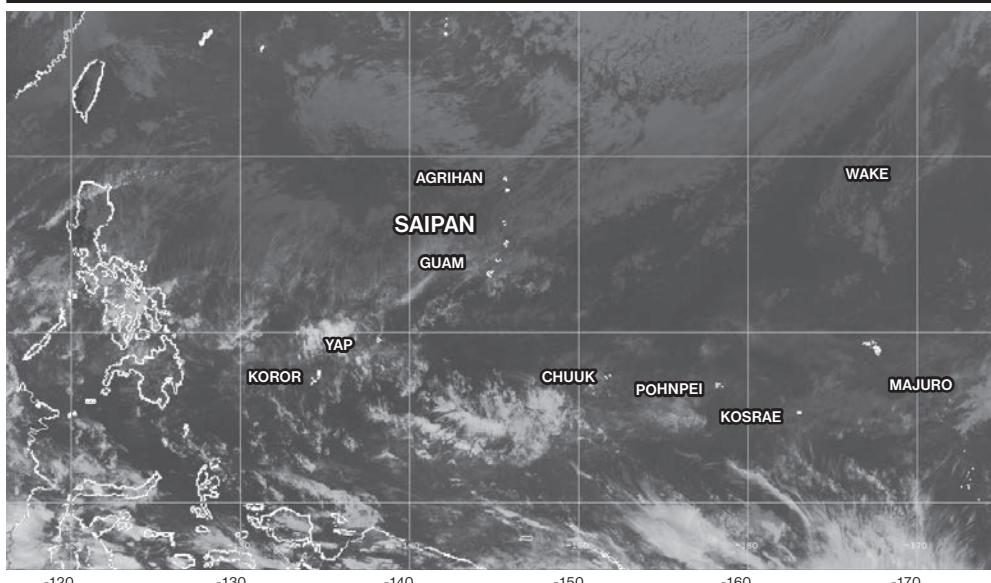
If you or a loved one is experiencing mental health difficulties, help is available. Call or text 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. NAMI Chicago can connect you with local resources at 833-626-4244.)

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Scattered showers. Partly sunny	Isolated showers. Mostly sunny	Partly sunny	Mostly sunny	Mostly sunny
81°	76°	82°	76°	83°
75°	84°	74°	83°	76°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 9:55 AM, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line feature is draped over Saipan and Tinian this morning, producing scattered showers and breezy conditions. The Ritidian buoy showed a sharp jump in seas a few hours ago. Max wave height data is showing 15 feet at times. Higher seas and swell are likely across CNMI waters due to the shear line feature. Large, hazardous surf is expected along north and east facing reefs. A High Surf Advisory and Small Craft Advisory remain in effect.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲	▼	°F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	85°	/	77°
Palau	Thunderstorms	82°	/	76°
Yap	Partly Cloudy	86°	/	79°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86°	/	81°
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	86°	/	81°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	86°	/	78°
Majuro	Cloudy	87°	/	78°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:34 AM	6:24 PM
Thursday	6:33 AM	6:24 PM
Friday	6:33 AM	6:24 PM
Saturday	6:32 AM	6:25 PM
Sunday	6:32 AM	6:25 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	1:51 AM	1:11 PM
Thursday	-	2:44 AM	2:02 PM
Friday	-	3:33 AM	2:55 PM
Saturday	-	4:20 AM	3:47 PM
Sunday	-	5:03 AM	4:38 PM

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AROUND THE GLOBE

	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	74° / 60°
Beijing	Sunny	53° / 27°
Hong Kong	Sunny	73° / 63°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	82° / 68°
London	Sunny	55° / 36°
Los Angeles	Sunny	80° / 51°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	90° / 75°
Melbourne	Rain	64° / 50°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	81° / 72°
New York	Showers	40° / 32°
Osaka	Sunny	48° / 37°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	48° / 37°
Busan	Showers	57° / 35°
Rome	Mostly Sunny	57° / 46°
Salem	Partly Cloudy	50° / 35°
San Francisco	Sunny	63° / 45°
Seoul	Cloudy	57° / 35°
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	66° / 56°
Washington, DC	Cloudy	60° / 35°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY FEET

5:17 AM	Low Tide	1.42
9:51 AM	High Tide	1.22
1:54 PM	Low Tide	1.41
10:13 PM	High Tide	-0.01

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 2023

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117 9:50AM 10:35AM Daily				UA174 8:00AM 8:46AM Daily			
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824 7:05AM 9:45AM 1, 3, 5				UA825 9:25PM 2:00AM+1 2, 4, 7			
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111 5:30AM 7:25AM Daily				PR110 10:05PM 3:55AM+1 Daily			
UA193 7:55PM 11:50PM 2, 5 via Palau				UA184 10:55PM 4:45AM+1 1, 3, 4, 6, 7			
UA183 8:00PM 9:50PM Daily				UA192 10:40PM 6:30AM+1 2, 5 via Palau			
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				UA189 12:40AM 6:30AM 3, 6			
UA117/183 9:50AM 9:50PM Daily via Guam				UA189/174 12:40AM 8:46AM+1 3, 6 via Guam			
UA117/193 9:50AM 11:50PM 2, 5 via Guam, Palau				UA184/174 10:55PM 8:46AM+1 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam			
OZ624/701 3:50PM 10:35AM+1 3, 6 via Incheon				UA192/174 10:40PM 8:46AM+1 2, 5 via Palau, Guam			
MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN				OZ704/623 11:50PM 2:20PM+1 2, 5 via Incheon			
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308 3:15AM 6:55AM 1, 4, 5, 7				OZ623 9:00AM 2:20PM 3, 6			
TW9308 3:50AM 7:20AM 1, 4, 5, 7				7C3406 10:10AM 3:30PM Daily			
OZ624 3:50PM 7:40PM 3, 6				TW307 8:45PM 2:15AM+1 3, 4, 6, 7			
7C3405 4:35PM 8:25PM Daily				TW9307 9:20PM 2:50AM+1 3, 4, 6, 7			

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, TWay Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. (*The Saipan Tribune* is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

MARIANAS SOUTHERN AIRWAYS

INITIAL DAILY FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 13, 2023

SAIPAN TO TINIAN			TINIAN TO SAIPAN		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
11:20					

Business

IHG announces signing of Hotel Indigo in Palau

IHG Hotels & Resorts has signed a management agreement with Palau Coral Club, to open Hotel Indigo Palau in the fourth quarter of 2024 or first quarter of 2025.

Hotel Indigo Palau will boast an outstanding location on Malakal Island, fronting onto a coral reef with amazing views and immediate access to world-class diving and marine life. It will feature approximately 200 guest rooms, an all-day dining Neighbourhood Café and separate restaurant, a sunset bar by the pool, meeting rooms for 60 people, a resort center, swimming pool, spa and gymnasium, and all the facilities necessary for guests to relax and enjoy a memorable stay.

An island country rich in nature with more than 200 islands surrounded by beautiful seas and coral reefs, the Republic of Palau is regarded as one of the world's best destinations for divers from all over the world, as well as snorkeling, kayaking, boating, and many other ocean activities.

The Hotel Indigo brand is famous for bringing the "Neighbourhood Story" of its destination to guests, weaving the location into various aspects of service, design, art and storytelling. This makes it the perfect brand to showcase Palau's amazing character, history, culture and natural beauty to guests from around the



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Hotel Indigo Palau boasts an outstanding location on Malakal Island, fronting onto a coral reef with amazing views and immediate access to world-class diving and marine life.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Hotel Indigo Palau features approximately 200 guest rooms, an all-day dining Neighbourhood Café and separate restaurant, a sunset bar by the pool, meeting rooms for 60 people, a resort center, among other amenities.

world. Hotel Indigo Palau's story will present a "Pledge to the Miraculous Sea," with a theme inspired by the natu-

ral beauty of Palau, one of the most pristine marine parades in the world.

"I'm so proud and ex-

cited that we have signed an agreement to open a Hotel Indigo property in Palau with the owner, Palau Coral Club, whose largest shareholder is Mr. Takao Yasuda, founder of Pan Pacific International Holdings Ltd. (PPIH). This will be IHG's first property in Palau, and its third in Mi-

cronesia. It also follows on from the recent signing of Hotel Indigo Tokyo Shibuya with PPIH, which will open in 2023. While Hotel Indigo Tokyo Shibuya and the Palau beach resort are two very different destination, they are both attractive destinations in their own right, attracting tourists from

» Hotel Indigo Palau will be IHG's third hotel in Micronesia

all over the world with a unique story and experience. We are confident that both will be very successful, sharing the unique stories of their respective neighborhood with the world. We thank PCC and PPIH for their great partnership, and look forward to working together for many years ahead," said IHG Hotels & Resorts managing director, Japan & Micronesia, Abhijay Sandilya.

Hotel Indigo Palau's easy accessibility from its key feeder markets, including Japan, Korea and China, means that it is destined to once again become a popular destination for many tourists from all over the world as travel resumes.

There are currently 135 open Hotel Indigo properties around the world, and a development pipeline of 124 hotels. In Japan, there are three Hotel Indigo properties open (Hotel Indigo Hakone Gora, Hotel Indigo Karuizawa and Hotel Indigo Inuyama Urakuen Garden), with Hotel Indigo Tokyo Shibuya scheduled to open in autumn 2023.

IHG continues to focus on expanding its portfolio in Japan and Micronesia. (PR)

Supreme Court weighs Biden student loan plan worth billions

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Supreme Court is taking up a partisan legal fight over President Joe Biden's plan to wipe away or reduce student loans held by millions of Americans.

The high court, with its 6-3 conservative majority, is hearing arguments Tuesday in two challenges to the plan, which has so far been blocked by Republican-appointed judges on lower courts.

Arguments are scheduled to last two hours, but likely will go much longer. The public can listen in on the court's website.

Twenty-six million people have applied and 16 million have been approved to have up to \$20,000 in federal student loans forgiven, the Biden administration says. The program is estimated to cost \$400 billion over 30 years.

"I'm confident the legal authority to carry that plan is there," Biden said Monday, at an event to mark Black History Month.

The president, who once doubted his own authority to broadly cancel student debt, first announced the program in August. Legal challenges quickly followed.

Republican-led states and

lawmakers in Congress, as well as conservative legal interests, are lined up against the plan as a clear violation of Biden's executive authority. Democratic-led states and liberal interest groups are backing the Democratic administration in urging the court to allow the plan to take effect.

Without it, loan defaults would dramatically increase when the pause on loan payments ends no later than this summer, the administration says. Payments were halted in 2020 as part of the response to the coronavirus pandemic.

The administration says a 2003 law, commonly known as the HEROES Act, allows the secretary of education to waive or modify the terms of federal student loans in connection with a national emergency. The law was primarily intended to keep service members from being worse off financially while they fought in wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Nebraska and other states that sued say the plan is not necessary to keep the rate of defaults roughly where it was before the pandemic. The 20 million borrowers who have their entire loans erased would get a "windfall" that will leave

them better off than they were before the pandemic, the states say.

Dozens of borrowers came from across the country to camp out near the court on a soggy Monday evening in hopes of getting a seat for the arguments. Among them was Sinyetta Hill, who said that Biden's plan would erase all but about \$500 of the \$20,000 or so she has in student loans.

"I was 18 when I signed up for college. I didn't know it was going to be this big of a burden. No student should have to deal with this. No person should have to deal with this," said Hill, 22, who plans to study law after she graduates from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in May.

Biden's plan could meet a frosty reception in the courtroom. The court's conservatives have been skeptical of other Biden initiatives related to the pandemic, including vaccine requirements and pauses on evictions. Those were billed largely as public health measures intended to slow the spread of COVID-19.

The loan forgiveness plan, by contrast, is aimed at countering the economic effects of the pandemic.

United makes it easier for families to sit together

CHICAGO—United announced an improved family seating policy that makes it easier than ever for children under 12 years old to sit next to an adult in their party for free—including customers who purchase Basic Economy tickets.

United's new policy is made possible through a series of investments in a new seat map feature that dynamically finds available adjacent seats at the time of booking. The online seat engine first reviews all available free Economy seats and then opens complimentary upgrades to available Preferred Seats, if needed.

Customers traveling with children under 12 will start to see more adjacent seat options immediately and the complete policy change will go into effect in early March.

In instances when adjacent seats are not available prior to

travel—due to things like last minute bookings, full flights or unscheduled aircraft changes—United's new policy also lets customers switch for free to a flight to the same destination with adjacent seat availability in the same cabin. Customers also won't be charged if there is a difference in fare price between the original and new flight.

"In an era where more families are working in a hybrid environment, they're traveling more often—and they're flying United," said Linda Jojo, Chief Customer Officer for United. "We're focused on delivering a great experience for our younger passengers and their parents and know it often starts with the right seat. We look forward to rolling out more family-friendly features this year."

Many airlines try and use a more manual process to seat

families together that can include blocking random seats or asking agents to facilitate seat swaps at the gate. Those circumstances often result in more stress and a longer boarding process for everyone.

The announcement reflects the investments United has made in its technology and tools. Since last summer, the airline has worked to improve its ability to seat families together more easily by optimizing the airline's seat engine to prioritize families who did not have seats assigned before their day of travel and prioritize adjacent seating for families during schedule changes, aircraft swaps or irregular operations.

United Polaris®, United First Class® and Economy Plus® seats remain separate products and are excluded from this family seating policy change. (PR)

Nation

Coronavirus origins still a mystery 3 years into pandemic

WASHINGTON (AP)—A crucial question has eluded governments and health agencies around the world since the COVID-19 pandemic began: Did the virus originate in animals or leak from a Chinese lab?

Now, the U.S. Department of Energy has assessed with “low confidence” in that it began with a lab leak, according to a person familiar with the report who wasn’t authorized to discuss it. The report has not been made public.

But others in the U.S. intelligence community disagree.

“There is not a consensus right now in the U.S. government about exactly how COVID started,” John Kirby, the spokesman for the National Security Council, said Monday. “There is just not an intelligence community consensus.”

The DOE’s conclusion was first reported over the weekend in the Wall Street Journal, which said the classified report was based on new intelligence and noted in an update to a 2021 document. The DOE oversees a national network of labs.

White House officials on Monday declined to confirm press reports about the assessment.

In 2021, officials released an intelligence report summary that said four members of the U.S. intelligence community believed with low confidence that the virus was first transmitted from an animal to a human, and a fifth believed with moderate confidence that the first

human infection was linked to a lab.

While some scientists are open to the lab-leak theory, others continue to believe the virus came from animals, mutated, and jumped into people—as has happened in the past with viruses. Experts say the true origin of the pandemic may not be known for many years—if ever.

CALLS FOR MORE INVESTIGATION

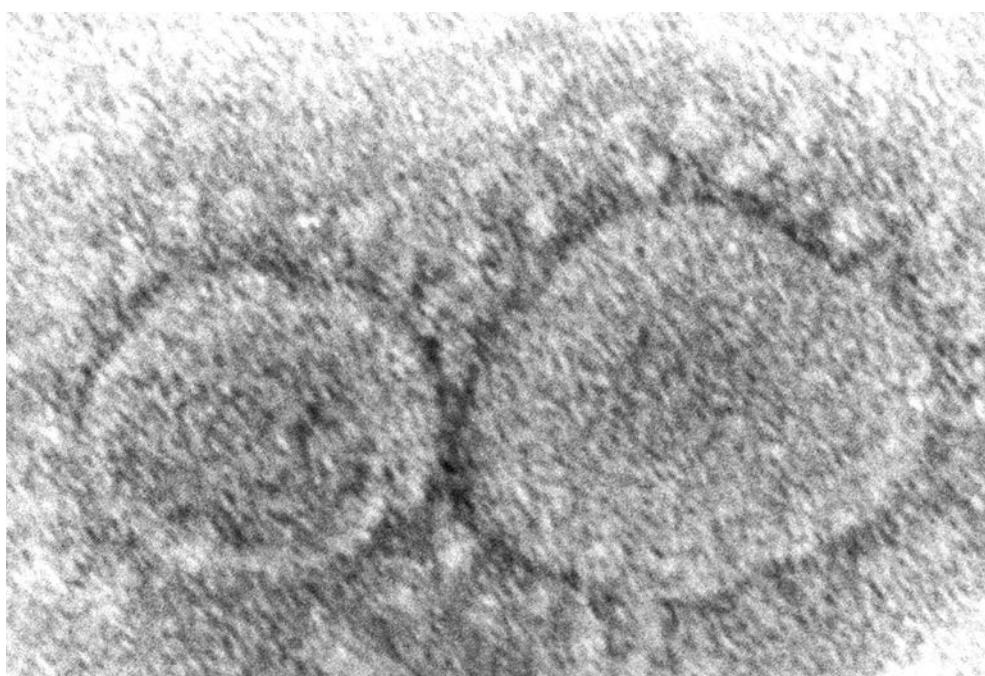
The U.S. Office of the Director of National Intelligence declined to comment on the report. All 18 offices of the U.S. intelligence community had access to the information the DOE used in reaching its assessment.

Alina Chan, a molecular biologist at the Broad Institute of Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard, said she isn’t sure what new intelligence the agencies had, but “it’s reasonable to infer” it relates to activities at the Wuhan Institute of Virology in China. She said a 2018 research proposal co-authored by scientists there and their U.S. collaborators “essentially described a blueprint for COVID-like viruses.”

“Less than two years later, such a virus was causing an outbreak in the city,” she said.

The Wuhan institute had been studying coronaviruses for years, in part because of widespread concerns—tracing back to SARS—that coronaviruses could be the source of the next pandemic.

No intelligence agency has



This 2020 electron microscope image made available by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows SARS-CoV-2 virus particles, which cause COVID-19.

said they believe the coronavirus that caused COVID-19 was released intentionally. The unclassified 2021 summary was clear on this point, saying: “We judge the virus was not developed as a biological weapon.”

“Lab accidents happen at a surprising frequency. A lot of people don’t really hear about lab accidents because they’re not talked about publicly,” said Chan, who co-authored a book about the search for COVID-19 origins. Such accidents “underscore a need to make work with highly dangerous pathogens more transparent and more accountable.”

Last year, the World Health Organization recommended a deeper probe into a possible lab

accident. Chan said she hopes the latest report sparks more investigation in the United States.

China has called the suggestion that COVID-19 came from a Chinese laboratory “baseless.”

SUPPORT FOR ANIMAL THEORY

Many scientists believe the animal-to-human theory of the coronavirus remains much more plausible. They theorize it emerged in the wild and jumped from bats to humans, either directly or through another animal.

In a 2021 research paper in the journal Cell, scientists said the COVID-19 virus is the ninth documented coronavirus to infect humans—and all the previ-

ous ones originated in animals.

Two studies, published last year by the journal Science, bolstered the animal origin theory. That research found that the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market in Wuhan was likely the early epicenter. Scientists concluded that the virus likely spilled from animals into people two separate times.

“The scientific literature contains essentially nothing but original research articles that support a natural origin of this virus pandemic,” said Michael

DeSantis moves toward GOP presidential bid on his terms

NEW YORK (AP)—Republican presidential contenders typically fight for prime speaking slots at the Conservative Political Action Conference. But as conservative activists gather in suburban Washington this week, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis will be courting donors more than a thousand miles away in Texas and California.

The apparent CPAC snub is nothing new for DeSantis, who has emerged in the early phase of the 2024 presidential election as a leading contender for the GOP nomination even as he ignores many conventions of modern politics.

DeSantis is a frequent voice in conservative cultural fights on cable television, but he often avoids gatherings of fellow Republican governors and party leaders, who are quick to complain in private about his go-it-alone approach. He is the only top-tier presidential prospect yet to court voters in Iowa, New Hampshire or South Carolina, the states hosting the GOP’s opening presidential primary contests. And he is often at odds with the press, refusing even to

notify local media of last week’s rare three-state tour with law enforcement.

Indeed, as DeSantis moves toward a White House run, it is becoming increasingly clear that the 44-year-old Republican governor will manage his presidential aspirations in his own way, on his own timeline, with or without allies in national GOP leadership or relationships with the press.

“DeSantis has, in his style and the actions he’s taken as governor, shown a willingness to fight the traditional powers that be, the establishment,” said David McIntosh, president of the Club for Growth, an influential conservative group based in Washington. McIntosh described DeSantis’ style as “refreshing” and suggested the GOP is ready to move on from former President Donald Trump.

For now, DeSantis is perhaps the most potent threat to Trump’s effort to win the GOP nomination for the third time. The Club for Growth will host DeSantis among a half-dozen presidential prospects at a closed-door retreat in Florida next weekend with top donors. Trump is not invited.

White House: No more TikTok on gov’t devices within 30 days

WASHINGTON (AP)—The White House is giving all federal agencies 30 days to wipe TikTok off all government devices, as the Chinese-owned social media app comes under increasing scrutiny in Washington over security concerns.

The Office of Management and Budget calls the guidance, issued Monday, a “critical step forward in addressing the risks presented by the app to sensitive government data.” Some agencies, including the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security and State, already have restrictions in place; the guidance calls on the rest of the federal government to follow suit within 30 days.

The White House already does not allow TikTok on its devices.

“The Biden-Harris Administration has invested heavily in defending our nation’s digital infrastructure and curbing foreign adversaries’ access to

Americans’ data,” said Chris DeRusha, the federal chief information security officer.

“This guidance is part of the Administration’s ongoing commitment to securing our digital infrastructure and protecting the American people’s security and privacy.”

The guidance was first reported by Reuters.

Congress passed the “No TikTok on Government Devices Act” in December as part of a sweeping government funding package. The legislation does allow for TikTok use in certain cases, including for national security, law enforcement and research purposes.

TikTok spokesperson Brooke Oberwetter said Monday: “The ban of TikTok on federal devices passed in December without any deliberation, and unfortunately that approach has served as a blueprint for other world governments. These bans are little

more than political theater.”

House Republicans are expected to move forward Tuesday with a bill that would give Biden the power to ban TikTok nationwide. The legislation, proposed by Rep. Mike McCaul, looks to circumvent the challenges the administration would face in court if it moved forward with sanctions against the social media company.

If passed, the proposal would allow the administration to ban not only TikTok but any software applications that threaten national security. McCaul, the chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee, has been a vocal critic of the app, saying it is being used by the Chinese Communist Party to “manipulate and monitor its users while it gobbles up Americans’ data to be used for their malign activities.”

“Anyone with TikTok downloaded on their device has given the CCP a back-

door to all their personal information. It’s a spy balloon into your phone,” the Texas Republican said in a statement Monday.

Sen. Bob Menendez, D-N.J., his counterpart in the Senate, did not shut down the idea of the chamber taking up a proposal that would empower Biden to take action against TikTok, saying it was “certainly something to consider.”

Oberwetter said: “We hope that when it comes to addressing national security concerns about TikTok beyond government devices, Congress will explore solutions that won’t have the effect of censoring the voices of millions of Americans.”

TikTok, owned by ByteDance Ltd., remains extremely popular and is used by two-thirds of teens in the U.S. But there is increasing concern that Beijing could obtain control of American user data that the app has obtained.

Asia

ASIAN BRIEFS

North Korea's Kim calls for unity to boost grain production

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korean ruler Kim Jong Un called for stronger public solidarity behind his leadership to increase the country's grain production significantly, state media reported Tuesday, amid outside worries about the country's worsened food insecurity. Foreign experts say North Korea is experiencing a serious shortfall of food in the aftermath of COVID-19 border restrictions and a reported push for greater state control over grain supply. The experts say they've seen no signs of mass deaths or famine due to the shortfall. During a ruling Workers' Party meeting on Monday, Kim expressed his government's determination "to bring about a revolutionary turn in the agricultural production without fail," according to the official Korean Central News Agency. "Nothing is impossible as long as the strong leadership system is established in the whole party and there is the united might of all the people," Kim was quoted as saying. KCNA didn't elaborate on whether Kim presented any specific steps to boost grain production. Many observers say meaningful steps to produce more grain would require more purchases of fertilizer, pesticides and agricultural machinery, as North Korea devotes much of its scarce resources to advance its nuclear weapons program. North Korea's chronic food shortage has likely deteriorated due to COVID-19 restrictions that choked off its external trade, persistent U.S.-led sanctions and its own mismanagement.

Japan, NZ to speed up intel sharing pact amid China concerns

TOKYO (AP)—The foreign ministers of Japan and New Zealand agreed on Monday to speed up talks on an intelligence sharing pact as the two island nations vowed to strengthen security ties and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region amid shared concern over an increasingly assertive China. New Zealand Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta and her Japanese counterpart, Yashimasa Hayashi, also agreed during their talks in Tokyo to collaborate on priority issues for Pacific Island nations such as climate change, maritime security and infrastructure. The two

countries pledged to ensure that the Pacific Island region, where China's influence is rapidly expanding, remains stable and prosperous and free from foreign interference and coercion, and that the "rights, freedoms and sovereignty of all countries regardless of size or power are protected," according to a statement released by Japan's Foreign Ministry. Hayashi said Japan, under its new National Security Strategy, is strengthening cooperation with like-minded countries to maintain and expand the "free and open" international order, and that cooperation with New Zealand is extremely important. In December, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's government adopted key security and defense upgrades, including a counterstrike capability that breaks with the post-World War II principle limiting Japan to self-defense, while doubling defense spending in five years. Kishida told a parliamentary session on Monday that the Defense Ministry is purchasing 400 U.S.-made Tomahawk cruise missiles for deployment as early as 2026. The Tomahawks would be used on Aegis radar-equipped destroyers and would be capable of striking targets as far as 1,600 kilometers (1,000 miles) away.

India revives civil militia after Hindu killings in Kashmir

DHANTRI, India (AP)—After seven Hindus were killed in early January in two back-to-back attacks in Dhangri village in disputed Kashmir, former Indian army soldier Satish Kumar described his sleepy mountainous village as an "abode of fear." Days after the deadly violence in the village in frontier Rajouri district, where homes are separated by maize and mustard fields, hundreds of residents staged angry protests across the Hindu-dominated Jammu region. In response, Indian authorities revived a government-sponsored militia and began rearming and training thousands of villagers, including some teenagers. Kumar was among the first people to join the militia under the new drive and authorities armed him with a semiautomatic rifle and 100 bullets. "I feel like a soldier again," said the 40-year-old Kumar, who runs a grocery store since his retirement from the Indian military in 2018. The militia, official-

ly called the "Village Defense Group," was initially formed in the 1990s as the first line of defense against anti-India insurgents in remote Himalayan villages that government forces could not reach quickly. As the insurgency waned in their operational areas and as some militia members gained notoriety for brutality and rights violations, drawing severe criticism from human rights groups, the militia was largely disbanded.

Afghan refugees in Pakistan protest delay in US resettlement

ISLAMABAD (AP)—Hundreds of Afghan refugees facing extreme delays in the approval of U.S. visas protested in Pakistan's capital on Sunday, as an American program to help relocate at-risk Afghans fleeing Taliban rule stalls. The U.S. government's Priority 1 and Priority 2, known as P1 and P2 refugee programs were meant to fast track visas for at-risk Afghans including journalists and rights activists after the Taliban takeover in their homeland. Those eligible must have worked for the U.S. government, a U.S.-based media organization or non-governmental organization in Afghanistan, and must be referred by the U.S.-based employer. Applicants have been waiting in Pakistan for more than one and a half years for U.S. officials to process their visa applications. The delay in approving visas and resettlement has left Afghan applicants in a highly vulnerable position as they contend with economic hardship and lack of access to health, education and other services in Pakistan. Mohammad Baqir Ahmadi, who said he'd helped to organize the protest outside of Pakistan's National Press Club in Islamabad, said many of the Afghans present were facing problems in extending visas to wait out the application process in Pakistan. Protesters said that applicants had yet to receive the preliminary interview necessary to begin the visa application process. "We, the holders of P1/P2 cases, your allies, and colleagues, played significant role toward expansion of democracy, human rights, and freedom of expression. We are currently asking for your support and companionship in the bad days of life," read one banner held by Afghan demonstrators.

"Many of them didn't know how to swim and they saw people disappear in the waves; they saw them die," said Giovanna Di Benedetto of Doctors Without Borders, which sent psychologists to help survivors.

STECCATO DI CUTRO, Italy (AP)—The death toll rose to at least 63 in the migrant tragedy off Italy's southern coast after rescue crews recovered several more bodies Monday, driving home once again the desperate and dangerous boat crossings of people seeking to reach Europe. Dozens more were believed to be missing.

At least eight of the dead were children who perished after a wooden boat broke up in stormy seas on the shoals off the Calabrian coast Sunday. Eighty people survived.

"Many of them didn't know how to swim and they saw people disappear in the waves; they saw them die," said Giovanna Di Benedetto of Doctors Without Borders, which sent psycholo-

World

New quake hits Turkey



AP

People warm themselves next to a collapsed building in Malatya, Turkey, on Feb. 7, 2023.

ANKARA, Turkey (AP)—A magnitude 5.6 earthquake shook southern Turkey on Monday, three weeks after a catastrophic tremor devastated the region, causing some already damaged buildings to collapse and killing at least one person, authorities said.

More than 100 people were injured as a result of Monday's quake which was centered in the town of Yesilyurt in Malatya province, Yunus Sezer, the chief of the country's disaster management agency, AFAD, told reporters. More than two dozen buildings collapsed.

A father and daughter who were trapped beneath the ruins of a four-story building in Yesilyurt were rescued with injuries. They had entered the damaged building to collect belongings.

Elsewhere in Malatya, search-and-rescue teams were sifting through the rubble of two damaged buildings that toppled on some parked cars, HaberTurk reported. It was not clear if anyone was trapped under the debris.

Malatya was among 11 Turkish provinces hit by the magnitude 7.8 earthquake that devastated parts of southern Turkey and northern Syria on Feb. 6.

That quake led to more than 48,000 deaths in both countries as well as the collapse or serious damage of 185,000 buildings in Turkey.

AFAD's chief urged people not to enter damaged buildings, saying strong aftershocks continue to pose a risk. More than 10,000 aftershocks have hit the region since Feb. 6.

The World Bank said Monday it estimates that the massive earthquake caused \$34.2 billion in "direct damages"—an equivalent of 4% of the country's GDP in 2021.

The recovery and reconstruction cost could be potentially twice as large, the World Bank said, adding that GDP losses would also add to the earthquake's cost.

The World Bank also estimated that 1.25 million people had been left temporarily homeless.

Meanwhile, fans of Turkish soccer team Besiktas threw stuffed toys on the field during a match on Sunday to support children affected by the earthquake. Toys and winter clothing were thrown on the stadium's grounds to be donated to children in the earthquake-hit regions.

Italy migrant tragedy death toll over 60; dozens missing

city of Crotone asked relatives to provide descriptions and photos of loved ones to help identify the dead in a makeshift morgue at a sports arena.

Fazal Amin, himself a migrant from Pakistan, waited outside the stadium in Crotone for information about a friend's brother in Turkey whose phone stopped working.

"He just wants to know if he is dead or alive," Amin said.

Italian authorities rejected criticism of a delayed rescue, noting they had dispatched two rescue boats shortly after the European Union's border agency spotted the 20-foot (6-meter) boat Saturday night as it headed toward shore. The rescuers had to turn back because of the rough seas, the authorities said.

The center also said in a statement that two Coast Guard vessels and one border police boat would keep up the search overnight, while on Tuesday morning, two helicopters and specialized divers would resume their search.

Authorities in the southern

Good Housekeeping

5 benefits of investing in wood furniture

By KATIE LAUGHRIDGE
Tribune News Service

Creating an inspired space takes the right combination of elements. Accessories and art and lighting and a plethora of textiles are in the mix, but the pieces that build the foundation from which a room is built are upholstered pieces and case goods. I'll take every chance I get to talk about upholstery since it marries my loves of functional art, handmade products, and textiles. But it's time to let wood furniture shine.

While various options are available on the market, wood furniture has always been a classic and timeless choice that offers both durability and beauty to a room. With a wide range of styles and finishes available, investing in wood furniture can be an excellent way to elevate the look and feel of your home or office, while also providing long-term value—and pieces to be passed down through generations.

Let's explore a few of my favorite benefits of investing in wood furniture.

Quality wood furniture lasts a lifetime

Buying cheaply made furniture may save you money upfront, but it will cost you more in the long run. When estimating the value of a piece, look beyond the sticker price and instead estimate the cost per use of an item over its lifespan. If you compare the price to the number of years a high-quality piece is likely to remain in use, wood wins every time.

When I say wood furniture can last a lifetime, that's really selling a lot of pieces short. Many wood tables, chests and cabinets last many lifetimes, passed down from generation to generation. I've been fortunate to have been given a beloved hope chest and dining room pieces used by my great-grandparents, and I love them more every year.

Wood tones are one of a kind

One of our favorite things about designing with wood is its one-of-a-kind character. From an investment standpoint, wood scores definite points for uniqueness. Even if a table is made from the same species of wood, every

piece of furniture will ultimately look different from the next because the grain and natural tones of the wood are unique to each individual tree from which the lumber is sourced. Incorporating wood tones are a subtle way to bring the distinctive textures of the outdoors in.

Wood pieces are versatile

Truly nothing beats the versatility of wooden furniture. Pieces like chests of drawers are so flexible—they can work tucked into a nook or a hallway, or they can serve as a dresser or as nightstands (for those of us with small closets). A great console can welcome guests in an entryway one year, divide a room and display gorgeous lamps behind the sofa the next, only

to be tucked into a nook the following year for a fresh work-from-home space.

Wood tones are playful

Wood's ability to mix, mingle and blend is unmatched. Using multiple wood tones in a room creates flow and movement. I firmly believe that when executing a design, wood pieces are things you can play with. A stained piece of wood furniture, or one painted in a neutral black or white, can move freely through many a space, something that not every piece of furniture with a bold color or specific pattern can offer.

Wood is easy maintenance

Most wood furniture can be easily maintained by simply



PROVIDED PHOTO/TNS
Wood's ability to mix, mingle and blend is unmatched.



PROVIDED PHOTO/TNS
Most wood furniture can be easily maintained by periodically wiping it down with a damp cloth then wiping away remaining moisture with a dry cloth.



PROVIDED PHOTO/TNS
Truly nothing beats the versatility of wooden furniture.



PROVIDED PHOTO/TNS
Incorporating wood tones is a subtle way to bring the distinctive textures of the outdoors in.

Life & Style

Rapid demise of 'Dilbert' is no surprise to those watching

NEW YORK (AP)—The comic strip "Dilbert" disappeared with lightning speed following racist remarks by creator Scott Adams, but it shouldn't come as a shock to anyone who has followed them both.

Adams, who is white, was an outspoken presence on social media long before describing Black people as a "hate group" on YouTube and, to some, "Dilbert" had strayed from its roots as a chronicler of office culture.

The editor of the San Francisco Chronicle, which dumped "Dilbert" last year, said the comic strip "went from being hilarious to being hurtful and mean." The Los Angeles Times, which joined dozens of other newspapers in dropping the comic following last week's remarks, had quietly replaced four of Adams' strips last year.

"He kind of ran out of office jokes and started integrating all this other stuff so after a while, it became hard

to distinguish between Scott Adams and 'Dilbert,'" said Mike Peterson, columnist for the industry blog The Daily Cartoonist.

As individual newspapers told readers they were dropping "Dilbert," the company that distributed the strip, Andrews McMeel Universal, said it was severing ties with Adams. By Monday, "Dilbert" was gone from the GoComics site, which also features many top comics such as "Peanuts" and "Calvin and Hobbes."

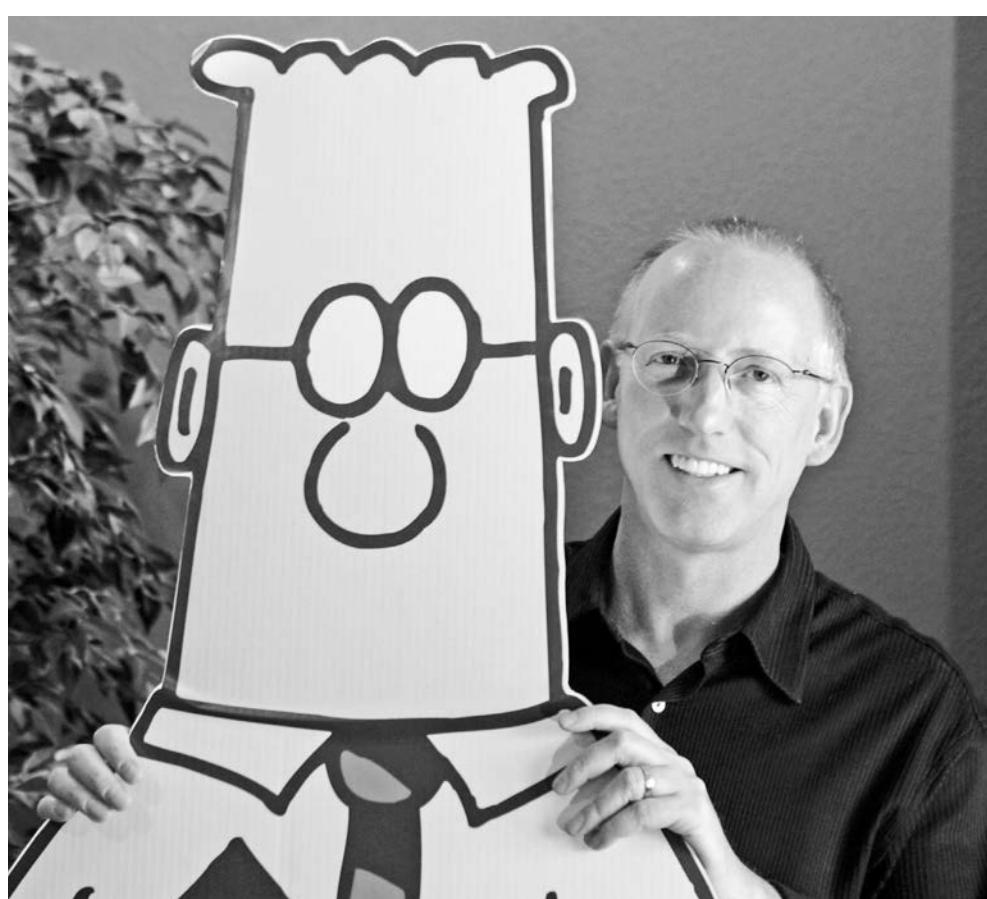
Adams said Monday that the strip, which first appeared in 1989, will only be available on his subscription service on the Locals platform.

"Dilbert" is effectively dead, Peterson said.

Adams said Monday on YouTube that his distributor didn't really have a choice because clients and other cartoonists were mad.

"They were just forced into it," he said.

On Twitter, he said his book publisher and book agent had



MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ/AP

Scott Adams, creator of the comic strip Dilbert, poses for a portrait with the Dilbert character in his studio in Dublin, Calif., Oct. 26, 2006.

"canceled" him. The Penguin Random House imprint Portfolio said it wouldn't publish Adams' book "Reframe Your Brain" in September, according to the Wall Street Journal.

Adams has long been active on Twitter, whose CEO, Elon Musk, was among the few to publicly back him. He also blogs regularly and puts out a regular podcast on YouTube.

He's attracted attention for comments he's made in the past, including saying in 2011 that women are treated differently by society for the same reason as children and the mentally disabled—"it's just easier this way for everyone." He said 2016 GOP presidential candidate Carly Fiorina had an "angry wife face."

Adams became a vocal supporter of former President Donald Trump, saying Trump had a hypnotist's skill in attracting followers. He said that stance cost him money in lost speaker's fees.

He said he lost the prime-time animated "Dilbert" series that ran on UPN for two seasons for "being white" when the network decided to target a Black audience, and that he lost two other corporate jobs because of his race.

During the Feb. 22 episode of his YouTube podcast "Real Coffee with Scott Adams," he referenced a Rasmussen Reports survey that had asked whether people agreed with the statement "It's OK to be white." Most agreed, but Adams noted that 26% of Black respondents disagreed and others weren't sure.

Cardi B: Court-ordered service 'the best thing' to happen

NEW YORK (AP)—Grammy-winning rapper Cardi B spoke to girls in a police mentorship program Friday as part of what she says has been an eye-opening and emotional week performing court-mandated community service for her role in a pair of brawls at New York City strip clubs in 2018.

The 30-year-old "Bodak Yellow" singer visited an NYPD "Girls Talk" event at

the police training academy in Queens and shared what the department said was "her rags to riches story." She danced with teens and posed for photos.

Cardi B's plea deal requires her to perform 15 days of community service by March 1 to avoid a 15-day jail sentence.

"I feel like there's so many people that make y'all probably feel like, 'This is

what's cool, this is what's going on, this is what it takes to be lit, this is what it takes to be fire,'" Cardi B told her young audience.

"Sometimes that's a little bit of peer pressure like on a girl. Don't fall into that. You know what I'm saying? Like, be great. Be you. You're amazing. You're dope yourself."

The NYPD posted a video to Twitter showing highlights

of the event.

That drew criticism from some people, including a retired police lieutenant, who questioned whether Cardi B was an appropriate role model for children given her sometimes provocative lyrics, criminal record and past admission that she drugged and robbed men while working as a stripper before she got famous.

Cardi B, a New York City

native whose real name is Belcalis Almanzar, has been chronicling her community service on Twitter all week. On Saturday, she wrote: "Community service has been the best thing that has happened to me."

She likened the experience to a spiritual journey that sometimes left her in tears. "Those people that we leave behind they just need somebody to talk and a lil push and YOU might be able to change their life forever," she wrote.

Wife has no appreciation for man's preferred dress

DEAR ABBY: I am a man who has been wearing lingerie for the past few decades. I discovered my love of panties when I slipped into my first pair at 17. At 22, I discovered the fun and sexiness of bras and other lingerie, and I wear them under my men's clothing.

I have gone through periods of love and alternating shame for being an "underdresser." I have confided this to a few women in my life and received mixed responses. Some were appalled; others were OK with it. My wife is in the first category. I told her while we were dating and modeled some for her. She thought it was "weird."

I tried, for her sake, to repress my desire to wear lingerie, but it has returned recently. I have been buying panties, bras and other items and wear them only at work or when I'm alone. I have found some solace in finally opening up to the women at the lingerie stores that what I am buying is for me, and I delight in the fact that they are accepting and help me find items I might like.

How do I approach this subject with my wife again and ask if she's open to me wearing lingerie and more often?

LIVING IN LINGERIE

DEAR LIVING: You have already discussed this with your wife, and she has made her feelings known. Do not expect her to have become more understanding on the sub-

ject of "underdressing." You are not the only straight man who finds this practice to be pleasurable. Because this is something you really feel compelled to do, go online to research groups for cross-dressers in your area and join one.

■■■■

DEAR ABBY: I am in love with my best friend, "Mitch." He's a father of three great girls. He works hard but can't handle his finances. His brother has to do it for him or nothing would get paid and his daughters wouldn't get what they need. Mitch has ADHD. He can't settle down.

We tried dating, but he cheated on me. We didn't talk for months, and then started talking again and things are good, even in the bedroom. But some days, he clams up and won't talk to me at all. Then, when he wants something, he will call me. Mitch wanted a 55-inch TV, so I got it for him. Then he wanted the new Xbox which, again, I bought. He makes twice as much as I do. Last week, he took off to see a girl and lied to me about it, saying he was "working out of town."

Mitch is coming home this weekend and wants to see me. I know what he wants—sex. Yes, the sex is great, but I think he is using me. He's 38; I'm 43. When we are together, we are good, but then he turns cold and doesn't talk to me for days. What do you think?

USED IN KENTUCKY

DEAR ABBY
BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



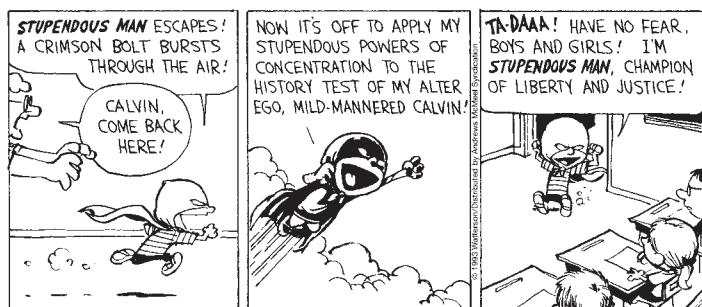
DEAR USED: Please reread your letter a few times. If you continue to see Mitch, hoping he will change, you are lost in a fantasy. The person you describe is dishonest, and he's using and milking you for everything he can get. Once you shut your wallet and cross your legs, he will disappear. Count on that. Please, for your own sake, make it SOON.

■■■■

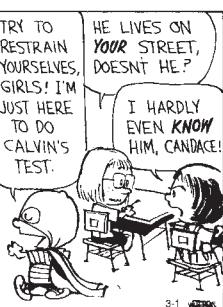
Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

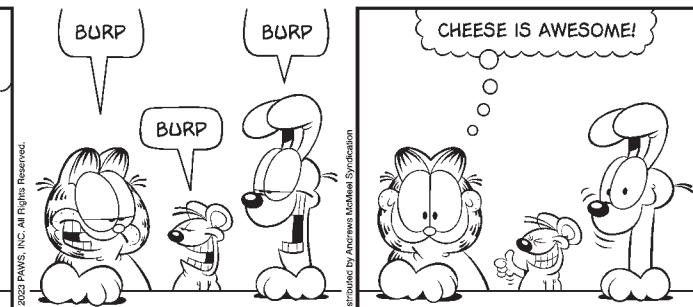
Calvin and Hobbes



By Bill Waterson



Garfield®



By Jim Davis

Adam@home



By Bryan Basset



The Duplex



By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	44 Snooze	5 Mode	27 "The X-Files"
1 Gallery display	46 Preamble	6 Supporting org.	28 Skin opening
4 Sidewalk eatery	50 Stately dances	29 Met solo	30 Alger's "before"
8 Rescue	55 Emeritus, briefly	31 Tragic	35 Triscuit maker
12 Neckline shape	56 Sulk	36 Upper House	38 A Bobbsey twin
13 Oodles	57 Detail, briefly	40 A Bobbsey doll	42 Wee dollop
14 "Let's go!"	58 Wall St. debut	45 El —, Texas	45 El —, Texas
15 Chef Garten	59 Run off	47 Small combo	47 Small combo
16 Olympic races	60 Roughly	48 Seized vehicle	49 "Alternatively," in a text
18 Vegas area	61 "What a cute puppy!"	50 Suntan lotion letters	51 MSN alternative
20 "Ain't — Sweet"	58 Wall St. debut	52 Street, in Montreal	53 "Morning Edition" airer
21 Firsties	59 Run off	54 — Moines	54 — Moines
24 Radiates	60 Roughly		
28 Overly suspicious	61 "What a cute puppy!"		
32 Actress Falco	58 Wall St. debut		
33 Mouths (Lat.)	59 Run off		
34 Arrived	60 Roughly		
36 Calendar abbr.	61 "What a cute puppy!"		
37 Fixes illegally	58 Wall St. debut		
39 Christine of "The Good Fight"	59 Run off		
41 Relaxed	60 Roughly		
43 Ms. McEntire	61 "What a cute puppy!"		

Solution time: 23 mins.



CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Justin Bieber, 29; Kesha, 36; Lupita Nyong'o, 40; Ron Howard, 69.

Happy Birthday: Stick to what you know and do well this year, and you won't be disappointed. Rid yourself of whatever has no meaning or purpose to make free time for things that matter. Anger is a waste of time and energy. Focus on positive change, simplifying your life and achieving the peace and comfort you deserve. Indulge in better health and overall happiness. Your numbers are 4, 10, 24, 27, 32, 38, 44.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Containing your thoughts and feelings will test you. Actions speak louder than words but can also lead to conflicts with those who disagree with you. If you want to win, put emotions aside and present facts that prove your point. ☀️

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): It's time to reevaluate your relationships and work ethic. Align yourself with people who share your likes and dislikes, and make a difference that promotes positive change in your community. Push for unity, fairness and making the world a better place. ☀️

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Intelligence and dedication will lead to victory if you don't let an outsider meddle with your plans. A trendy new look will lift your spirits and attract input from someone who can help you recognize what's possible. Focus on helping others. ☀️

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Keep tabs on your emotional reactions. It will be easy to misinterpret someone's words or gestures. Look for

answers and discuss possibilities with someone who can offer a different perspective regarding available choices. A reunion will clear up uncertainty. ☀️

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Go directly to an expert before you make a decision that can affect your health, finances or emotional well-being. Step up and do what you do best, and you'll gain support and the momentum required to reach your goal. Romance is encouraged. ☀️

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Jumping back and forth between what you want and what you are responsible for will be your downfall. Pick a lane and stay in it to completion. Don't shy away from change when you should embrace what's coming with the will to succeed. ☀️

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Show enthusiasm, participate and make a difference. Join forces with someone you love and respect, and together you will find a path that brings you joy and satisfaction. Helping others will be a learning experience that inspires your next chapter. Romance is favored. ☀️

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Examine every aspect of your next move. Satisfaction won't be easy to achieve if you are sloppy, close-minded or emotional. You may not relish change, but it will end what's no longer working for you and bring forth opportunity. ☀️

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Misinformation will have lasting repercussions. Don't trust anyone to give you sound advice. Ask questions, follow through and conclude based on your findings. Honesty and integrity will save you from embarrassment and loss. Concentrate on what matters to you. ☀️

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY



COURTESY 2007 UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Jump at a chance to change direction. Choose what satisfies your soul and follow the dreams that give you hope. Supplement skills and qualifications, but don't waste time pursuing something for the wrong reason. Put what you enjoy doing most into play. ☀️

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Emotional spending will rob you of peace of mind. By paying attention to living expenses, you'll find a way to cut costs and save. Avoid people who try to coerce you into doing costly and personally damaging things. ☀️

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Don't make a fuss. Stick close to home and do things that soothe your soul and give you food for thought. A positive change will set you on a path that motivates you to eliminate the drama from your life and replace it with peace of mind and joy. ☀️

Birthday Baby: You are original, insightful and thoughtful. You are emotional and forgiving.

•: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ☀️: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ☀️: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ☀️: Aim high; start new projects. ☀️: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

A SLEW OF ...

Solution: 11 letters

T	S	S	N	O	I	T	S	E	U	Q	I	N	F	J
E	E	E	O	A	S	G	N	I	L	E	E	(F)	A	S
S	M	O	I	S	C	E	S	E	I	V	©	M	T	P
T	A	R	T	T	M	T	T	M	A	©	S	S	A	O
S	G	T	C	E	U	A	I	O	D	T	O	N	D	R
T	K	T	E	B	H	D	X	V	N	P	U	A	S	T
N	R	U	L	E	S	O	S	E	I	M	S	C	E	S
E	O	Y	L	I	W	O	M	N	B	T	G	K	G	M
M	W	T	O	Y	S	T	E	E	O	U	I	S	A	E
N	R	N	C	S	N	W	R	N	W	I	G	E	S	M
G	E	E	I	S	S	L	A	T	O	T	S	S	O	
I	P	L	O	H	C	R	A	E	S	E	R	O	E	R
S	A	P	H	O	N	E	C	A	L	L	S	K	M	I
S	P	M	A	T	S	T	A	R	S	Y	A	S	S	E
A	B	U	N	D	A	N	C	E	M	A	I	L	S	S

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

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7	1		8	2	4	5								
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Difficulty: ★★★

3-1

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2-2K

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

LaMelo Ball breaks ankle in Hornets' win over Pistons



CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—LaMelo Ball made six 3-pointers before breaking his right ankle in the third quarter, and the Charlotte Hornets held on to beat the Detroit Pistons 117-106 on Monday night for their fifth straight victory.

Terry Rozier scored 22 points, Gordon Hayward had 19 points and rookie Mark Williams added 15 points and 11 rebounds for Charlotte, which is still second-to-last in the Eastern Conference standings—ahead of only Detroit.

Ball finished with 18 points on 6-of-7 shooting from 3-point range, his fifth straight game making at least five 3s. He was hurt on a non-contact play, and the Hornets announced after the game that he had fractured his right ankle.

Hamidou Diallo scored 23 points, and James Wiseman had his best game since coming to Detroit from Golden State as part of a four-team trade, finishing with 23 points on 9-of-11 shooting. Marvin Bagley added 21 points and 12 rebounds off the bench for Detroit, which has lost five straight.

KNICKS 109, CELTICS 94

NEW YORK (AP)—Julius Randle and Immanuel Quickley each scored 23 points,



Charlotte Hornets guard LaMelo Ball walks off the court after being shaken up on a play during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Detroit Pistons in Charlotte, N.C., Monday, Feb. 27, 2023.

and surging New York won its sixth straight and knocked Boston from the top spot in the NBA.

Celtics All-Star Jayson Tatum struggled through a 6-for-18 shooting performance and was ejected in the fourth quarter after picking up his second technical foul. He finished with 14 points, nine

assists and seven rebounds.

Jalen Brunson added 17 points for the Knicks (36-27), who inched ahead of Brooklyn into fifth place in the Eastern Conference.

Malcolm Brogdon scored 22 for the Celtics (44-18). They slipped percentage points behind Milwaukee (43-17), which has won 14 straight

games and now owns the NBA's best record.

Marcus Smart added 19 points but Boston missed 20 of its first 22 attempts from 3-point range and had its three-game winning streak snapped.

HEAT 101, 76ERS 99

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—

Jimmy Butler hit an acrobatic reverse layup in the final minutes and finished with 23 points, 11 rebounds and nine assists as Miami edged Philadelphia.

Butler's spinning move and finishing layup while driving between the Sixers' Joel Embiid and P.J. Tucker gave the Heat a 100-99 lead

New Hawks coach Snyder facing difficult midseason transition

ATLANTA (AP)—Quin Snyder was more than just the first coaching candidate contacted when Atlanta Hawks general manager Landry Fields began looking to replace Nate McMillan.

Snyder was the only candidate interviewed by Fields.

“Everything we were looking for, it was check, check, check,” Fields said of his conversation with Snyder, the former Utah Jazz coach, who was introduced on Monday as the Hawks’ new coach. Fields said finding the right fit immediately with Snyder “was a big moment.”

Snyder will make his Atlanta debut on Tuesday night, when the Hawks play at home against Washington. Joe Prunty, who was 2-0 as the interim coach, will remain on the bench beside Snyder.

The Hawks announced Snyder’s hiring on a five-year deal on Sunday night, only five days after McMillan was fired with the team mired in eighth place in the Eastern Conference.

The announcement was not a surprise. Fields confirmed on Wednesday that Snyder was a candidate.

Fields hopes the Hawks,

currently in position for a spot in the play-in tournament, can finish the regular season strong under Snyder and earn a playoff spot as one of the top six teams in the East.

The Hawks (31-30) have struggled to reclaim the success they enjoyed under McMillan in reaching the 2021 Eastern Conference finals. The expectation to find that winning formula is now transferred to Snyder in a potentially difficult transition so late in the season.

The timing of the Hawks’ change created an opening for Fields to have exclusive conversations with Snyder.

Fields said that opportunity to be first in line with Snyder had no bearing on his decision to fire McMillan during the All-Star break. Fields said he was motivated to make a move because he believed the Hawks were not fulfilling their potential under McMillan.

“We had two separate things going on—what is the state of our team right now and how we can best serve them and set us up for end of the season success following the All-Star break and then how are we going to position ourselves as an organization,” Fields said, adding “that doesn’t necessitate that Quin was going to take over at midseason. It wasn’t

a huge factor for us. I knew

that first and foremost we had to address our ballclub and that’s what we did.”

Snyder said the opportunity in Atlanta “lined up just right” with what he was looking for in his next coaching job after leaving Utah following last season.

New Hawks assistant general manager Kyle Korver played for Snyder in Atlanta and Utah. Korver gave Snyder positive reviews about Fields. Snyder said he believes the Hawks provide “the character in the front office” he sought.

“I wanted to find that type of partnership and I know that’s why this situation, I think, is such a good fit for me personally,” Snyder said, adding that he and Korver “have been friends for a long time. ... His feelings about Landry, everything was affirmed that I had heard about Landry.”

Snyder met with Atlanta players on Monday morning. Some players, including Dejounte Murray and Bogdan Bogdanovic, attended the afternoon news conference. The team’s biggest star, point guard Trae Young, was not in attendance.

Source: Lakers bracing for James to miss multiple weeks

By TIM REYNOLDS
AP Basketball Writer

LeBron James of the Los Angeles Lakers may miss multiple weeks with an injury to his right foot, a person familiar with the situation said Monday night.

The full extent of the injury is not yet known and more test results were pending, said the person, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because neither James nor the Lakers announced anything about a long-term absence.

The Lakers had already ruled James—he NBA’s all-time leading scorer—out for Tuesday’s game at Memphis with what they called right foot soreness.

James played 37 minutes in the Lakers’ 111-108 win at Dallas on Sunday, helping Los Angeles rally from a 27-point deficit. But he left the arena with a pronounced limp, with video from The Dallas Morning News showing how much the foot was bothering him.

He got hurt in the third quarter, grabbing at the ankle after spending some time on the floor in obvious pain. But he

with 1:28 to play.

Philadelphia rallied from an 11-point deficit in the fourth quarter. Butler added a free throw with 8.1 seconds left.

James Harden had a chance to win the game for the 76ers, but his 3-point try at the buzzer bounced off the back of the rim.

Gabe Vincent scored 14 points and Bam Adebayo added 13 as the Heat snapped a four-game skid.

Embiid had 27 points and 12 rebounds. Harden finished with 20 points and 12 assists.

MAGIC 101, PELICANS 93

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Paolo Banchero capped a 29-point performance with three clutch mid-range jumpers in the closing minutes, and Orlando beat New Orleans.

The first two of Banchero’s big shots broke ties before he hit another to make it 97-93. Franz Wagner, who had 11 points, added a 10-foot floater from the baseline with 25 seconds left and Orlando held on from there. New Orleans lost its fourth straight.

Markelle Fultz and Moritz Wagner each scored 14 points for Orlando.

Brandon Ingram scored 25 points for New Orleans, which is clinging to the 10th and final Western Conference play-in spot by percentage points over Portland.

stayed in to finish the game, noting how important it was to the Lakers’ playoff hopes.

“It’s been better,” James said. “But I definitely wasn’t going to locker room and not finish the game. The importance of this game and then the momentum that we had, I felt like we could steal one after being down.”

James leads the Lakers in scoring at 29.5 points per game, and said at the All-Star break earlier this month that the team’s closing stretch this season would be some of the most important games he has played—noting he didn’t want to miss the postseason for a second consecutive year.

The Lakers (29-32) started Monday 12th in the Western Conference, a game from 10th and the final spot in the play-in tournament, and only 2 1/2 games behind Dallas in the race for sixth. The top six teams in each conference are guaranteed playoff berths.

If James—a 19-time All-Star, playing in his 20th NBA season—misses extended time, the Lakers’ task of getting in figures to become significantly tougher.

MLB average salary rose 14.8% to record \$4.22M last season

**N E W
Y O R K**
(AP)—Major League Baseball's average salary rose 14.8% to a record \$4.22 million last year after the end of the lockout, boosted by big deals for Max Scherzer, Francisco Lindor, Marcus Semien and Corey Seager.

The rate of increase was the highest since a 17.7% increase in 2000 to \$1.61 million, according to final calculations by the players' association.

The average had dropped in each of the previous four seasons before 2022, sparking player anger that was expressed by the union during a 99-day lockout that ended last March.

Last year's average salary was calculated by the union at \$4,222,193, up from \$3,679,335 in 2021. MLB, which uses a slightly different method, calculated the average at \$4,117,472, up 15% from \$3,579,341 in 2021.

Payrolls, a more complete reflection on spending, rose 12.6% to \$4.56 billion from \$4.05 billion.

Salaries have escalated higher this past offseason. The Mets have boosted their payroll to a projected \$370 million, well past the previous record of \$297.9 million of the 2015 Los Angeles Dodgers.

Some owners are arguing for significant change to lessen payroll disparity when the current labor contract expires after the 2026 season, and MLB established another committee to examine economics.

"History would suggest that



New York Mets pitcher Max Scherzer prepares to throw live batting practice during spring training baseball practice Monday, Feb. 20, 2023, in Port St. Lucie, Fla. AP

an economic committee ... is really hyperfocused on a salary cap—or getting to a salary cap when we next sit down to negotiate," union head Tony Clark said Saturday.

"We're never going to agree to a cap. Let me start there. We don't have a cap, we're not going to agree to a cap," Clark added. "A salary cap is the ultimate restriction on player value and player salary. We believe in a market system. The market system has served our players, our teams and our game very well."

Clark suggested some teams maintain low payrolls as strategy rather than because of lack of revenue.

"The product on the field does well, fans come to the ballpark. Fans come to the ballpark, local revenue increase in all facets. That model has served our industry remarkably well," he said. "Can or won't is a valid question to ask when teams in an industry that has grown are still in a world where their payrolls are half of what they may have been 10 or 15 years ago."

Manfred has said MLB had \$10.8 billion in revenue last year. Clark praised the active free-agent market.

"What is interesting is the comments finding into the way into the headlines against the backdrop of a remarkably exciting offseason, where teams competing and engaging in the free-agent market created a level of excitement that I would think is a positive," Clark said.

Figures are based on the 1,043 players on active rosters and injured lists as of Aug. 31,

Commanders release quarterback Carson Wentz after one season

By STEPHEN WHYNO
Associated Press

The Washington Commanders released Carson Wentz on Monday, an expected move that puts an end to the one-season experiment with the veteran quarterback that did not work out.

After giving up draft picks to acquire him in a trade with Indianapolis last March, the Commanders were able to get out of the final two years of Wentz's contract without any salary cap penalty.

Wentz threw for 11 touchdowns and nine interceptions in eight games, going 2-5 as the starter sandwiched around a broken finger that sidelined him for several weeks.

When Taylor Heinicke struggled late in the season, coach Ron Rivera turned back to Wentz, who had three interceptions in a loss to Cleveland that contributed to knocking Washington out of playoff contention.

From that point forward,



Washington Commanders quarterback Carson Wentz throws to a receiver in the first half of an NFL football game against the Cleveland Browns, Sunday, Jan. 1, 2023, in Landover, Md. AP

Rivera gave no thought to handing the job back to Wentz. Rookie Sam Howell started the regular-season finale and goes into offseason workouts as the starting QB.

Wentz, on the other hand, faces a very uncertain future at age 30. If signed, he would join his fourth NFL team in as many seasons after flaming

out in Philadelphia, Indianapolis and Washington.

The Commanders also released veteran safety Bobby McCain, whose presence was made redundant by the emergence of Darrick Forrest. McCain's release saves roughly \$2.32 million in salary cap space.

McCain, 29, had four in-

terceptions in 34 games over two seasons with Washington but none in 2022 for a defense that often played with three safeties on the field at once.

The Commanders must next decide what to do about standout defensive tackle Daron Payne, who led the team with a career-high 11½ sacks and could get a big payday in free agency. Putting the franchise tag on him at a price of \$18.9 million—much less than the money saved by cutting Wentz—is one option.

If Payne is back, Washington's defense will again have high expectations, especially with Chase Young fully healthy after recovering from a torn ACL in his right knee.

The Commanders are expected to change more on offense than defense after hiring two-time Kansas City Chiefs Super Bowl-winning assistant Eric Bienemy as coordinator and assistant head coach. That includes at quarterback after Wentz was shown the door.

the last day before active rosters expanded from 26 to 28. The union's average includes prorated shares of option buy-

outs, which MLB does not.

Neither side included the \$50 million bonus pool for pre-arbitration-eligible players.

Mets' Scherzer loves 'cat-and-mouse' game of MLB's new rules

PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla. (AP)—New York Mets right-hander Max Scherzer described pitching under Major League Baseball's new rules as a "cat-and-mouse" game.

Contrary to previous years, Scherzer feels the pitcher finally has control of the tempo because of the new pitch clock.

In his first start of the Grapefruit League schedule, Scherzer allowed a run in the second inning but struck out five while working the first two innings of the Mets' 6-3 win over Washington.

"Really, the power the pitcher has now — I can totally dictate pace," the three-time Cy Young Award winner said. "The rule change of the hitter having only one timeout changes the complete dynamic of the hitter-and-pitcher dynamic. Yeah, I love it."

The pitch clock is among a series of new rules for this season—including limits on infield shifts and larger bases—that MLB hopes will improve pace of play and introduce more action into the game.

The average game time through three days of spring training is 2 hours, 39 minutes, down from an average of 3:01 for all of spring training last year.

Scherzer says he is learning to play around with the pitch clock.

Washington's Michael Chavis, the second hitter in the second inning, stepped out of the box when he felt Scherzer was taking too long. That was fine with Scherzer.

The right-hander held the ball for more than 10 seconds before delivering the next pitch as Chavis had to remain in the batter's box, locked eyes with Scherzer. The veteran pitcher felt he had imposed his will, even though Chavis ultimately singled to right.

"I can work extremely quick. And I can work extremely slow," Scherzer said. "There's another layer here to be able to mess with the hitter's timing."

"I can come set even before the hitter's in the box. I can't pitch until eight (seconds left on the clock). But as soon as his eyes are up, I can go. If his eyes are up with 12 seconds to go, I can fire."

"I had the conversation with the umpire (David

Rackley) to make sure that's legal. And that is (legal). I'm just getting used to how this is going to be in 2023."

According to MLB, there were 69 pitch-timer violations through the first 35 spring training games over the weekend—including 35 violations in 16 games Sunday.

While Scherzer thinks the timer is working in pitchers' favor, hitters aren't complaining, either.

"I like it," Yankees star Aaron Judge said. "I think you can kind of play around with it a little bit. I think it definitely speeds up the game. Anything that kind of keeps the pitcher moving and on the go, and hopefully keep him out of breath, I'm looking forward to it."

Cardinals manager Oliver Marmol said MLB is providing updates—nearly in real time—on the rules changes package that is making this spring training unique.

The two major changes are a pitch clock and a limit on extreme infield shifts.

"They did a really nice job of sending out a memo this morning with all the things that took place yesterday and questions that players and managers that just had to be addressed in order that you can cover it with your staff and club as you feel appropriate," Marmol said. "So we did that with our staff and brought two different points with our players because they've done a really good job of communication."

There were more hiccups on Sunday throughout the Cactus and Grapefruit League games, but most took the changes in stride.

Rockies reliever Daniel Bard was called for a ball after throwing a warmup pitch after the 30-second deadline heading into an inning. The 30-second mark before innings was also a source of confusion during the Cardinals-Marlins game. Two Cardinals pitchers were called for balls before the start of innings before, according to Marmol, the umpires gathered and realized they were interpreting the rule incorrectly.

"It's spring training for everybody," Marmol said. "Those things will get ironed out before we get out of here."

Dolphins, Ayuyus' lead boys varsity caging

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER


The Marianas High School Dolphins and Kagman High School Ayuyus boys basketball varsity teams lead the pack in the 2022-2023 IT&E Interscholastic Boys High School Basketball League.

The Dolphins coasted to an undefeated 5-game winning streak after they edged Saipan Southern High School, 46-40 last Wednesday; while the Ayuyus defeated Mount Carmel School, 44-30 for also their fifth win last Friday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

Dolphins' Airson Atan engaged in a scoring duel with the Mantas' Rasg Asuo all game long, but the former pulled ahead into the lead in the end.

It was anyone's game in the

first half as the Dolphins and Mantas took turns at the net as multiple 3-pointers exploded off of SSHS' Elijah Garcia's deep shots—but it was MHS' Atan who banked a shot from 3-point territory and followed it up with a field goal that secured the 19-18 lead heading into the second half.

Atan continued to steamroll his way through homecourt as in the end, he scored 20 points—the last 4 of which came from free throws.

Meanwhile, the Mantas had the trinity of only Asuo, Garcia, and John Kae Raquepo taking turns at the basket—with Asuo ending the game with 18 markers, Garcia with 15, and Raquepo with 7.

The Dolphins' lineup of Aiden Suba assisted Atan with 12 points, while Khristian David contributed 10 of his own.

On Friday night, the Ayuyus were still a force to be reckoned with as they continued to destroy all enemies in their



LEIGH GASES
Saipan Southern High School's John Kae Raquepo is fouled but made the shot against Marianas High School's Charlz Sanchez in their game of the 2022-2023 IT&E Interscholastic Boys High School Basketball League last Wednesday at the MHS Gymnasium.

path—with the Knights as their latest victim.

The Ayuyus' one-man army, Frankie Satur, continued his

The Knights did not stand a chance in the first half with the bombardment of layup after layup and jump shots from the Ayuyus, and were reduced to an 18 point deficit.

In the second half, the Knights' Lance Lorio and Derek Sasamoto tried to tag-team and make a push for a better game with 9 points each, but it was the support of Satur that brought them down.

The Ayuyus' Anthony Dikito scored 11 points, while Austin Diaz had five of his own, and Lucio Aldan scored a 3-pointer.

In the other varsity bout on Wednesday night, Saipan International School brought down Grace Christian Academy, 72-69. In the junior varsity games, MHS JV-2 lost to KHS, 26-40; while MHS JV won against SSHS, 39-25.

On Friday night's other varsity game, SSHS defeated SIS, 75-44. In the junior varsity games, SSHS beat MHS

JV-2, 28-27; and MHS JV won against MCS, 39-21.

In the varsity standings, KHS and MHS lead with their 4 wins; SSHS is at 4-1; MCS is at 3-2; Agape Christian School is 2-3; SIS is 1-4; and Grace Christian Academy is 0-6.

In the junior varsity standings, MHS JV is still undefeated at 5-0, KHS is 3-2; MHS JV-2 is 3-3; SSHS is at 2-3; MCS JV have yet to win with six losses; Rota is at 1-1; and Tinian is at 2 losses.

MHS 46 – Atan 20, Suba 12, David 10, Sanchez 2, Mister 2.

SSHS 40 – Asuo 18, Garcia 15, Raquepo 7.

Scoring by halves: 19-18; 46-40.

KHS 44 – Satur 21, Dikito 11, Diaz 5, Aldan 3, Rabauliman 2, Hocog 2.

MCS 29 – Sasamoto 9, Lorio 9, Borja 7, Mercado 2, Han 2.

Scoring by halves: 26-8; 44-29.

YOUNG

From Page 20

class and in the open 55-kg weight class and settled for silver; and Gimed lifted in the youth 81-kg division.

Cheyenne, a 21-year-old, lifted a total of 148kg, with a best snatch lift of 68kg and a best clean & jerk lift of 80kg.

Eighteen-year-old Anniegail lifted an overall weight of 137kg, while her best snatch was 60kg and her best clean & jerk was 77kg.

Andrew, a 13-year-old, lifted a total of 144kg with his best lifts of 62kg in the snatch and 82kg in the clean & jerk.

Gimed, a 12-year-old, lifted 135kg overall with a snatch lift best of 6kg and a clean & jerk best of 70kg.

Cheyenne, the older sister of Anniegail, said that she was so excited for her first international competition. "I did not want to let anyone down but I put everything to the side—my emotions, because I wanted to

hit the numbers that I had set."

She said the feeling of lifting off-island was similar to lifting during the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022, but that it was different because this time she trained in the warmup area with Philippines Olympic gold medalist Hidilyn Diaz and her coach and husband Julius Naranjo.

"I think that's the reason why I had the outcome that I did was because of them and my

coach Angel [San Nicolas]."

Anniegail had the opposite disposition from her sister and said that she was a nervous wreck. However, she still managed to pull through and said that "it's okay, I'll learn from it, reflect upon it, move on, and do better next time."

She will be lifting in the last qualifiers this March and said that she wants to be able to hit the numbers she set for herself, and work on focus-

ing more on her lifts instead of people around her so that nerves won't get to her again.

Andrew, who trains in the HD Weightlifting Camp under coach and weightlifter Angel San Nicolas, said that although it was his first international competition, he didn't feel that nervous.

He was the lone competitor in his division, but said that he felt he could've done better in the snatch portion. He said for now, training will continue until the last qualifier in March.

For Gimed, he said that it was exciting and fun to have been able to travel and compete elsewhere. He added that it was a good experience because "sometimes I like when there's pressure on me so that I can perform better."

Despite missing his first two attempts in the clean & jerk, he managed to salvage a lift in his last attempt.

San Nicolas, who trains the Manuel sisters, Andrew, and Gimed, said that as their coach for their first international com-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Cheyenne Manuel attempts a snatch lift in her 64-kg weight class during the Guam Open National Championships 2023 last Saturday at the Guam National Guard Center in Barrigada, Guam.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ronald Villafria shows off his Luneta To Tagaytay 60KM Midnight Ultramarathon medal and trophy after completing the race last Sunday.



Ayta 555K Bike, which he also virtually completed on Saipan in a time of 23:06.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ronald Villafria poses at a picturesque road atop Tagaytay.

VILLAFRIA

From Page 20

the Honolulu Marathon, his run family on Saipan is fully committed to cheering him on and supporting from afar.

"He ran 70K while he was here for Christmas break. He's one of our only two off-island members, the other being Jalen Lucido. We are proud he's still running, representing the NMI out there."

Next up for Villafria is the international Animo Marathon this coming weekend. He is also planning to take part in the 100K Pampanga to Bataan Death March.

Villafria is currently taking up EIM Electrical Installation Maintenance courses under the Technical Education And Skills Development Authority in Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija.

Prior to taking part in the Luneta To Tagaytay 60KM Midnight Ultramarathon, Villafria had his first taste of an ultramarathon when he

entered the 70K Ayta Ultra-marathon. He ran that virtually on Saipan with a time of 10:50:43.

He also took part in the

"I kept sliding on the turns, hitting some rocks. Throughout the races, rocks were spread out more throughout the track, which made it more tough during the second heat!"

She added that Ferrer and Celis gave her a run for her money in the Minis II Class.

"There was competition during the Minis II. There was a small battle with me and the two other riders. They really made the Minis II Class more interesting to watch and fun to race," she said.

Asked if she misses the Powerpuff Girls Class, Pangelinean said she's slowly getting used to the tougher competition in the Minis II Class.

"One difference I've noticed between the Minis II Class and the Powerpuff Girls Class is you're racing with different levels of riders. There are more competitive riders in

the Minis II Class. The Powerpuff Girls Class was fun to race with riders with the same gender, but the Minis II Class really brings on the show!"

She dedicated her latest win to her family for the support they always extend to her and her brothers.

"I would also like to thank my team sponsors Inas Kitchen, Pokka (Marpac) YCO True Value Hardware, Ericco Racing Team, and Rep. Roy Ada (R-Saipan)," said Pangelinean.

In the six-lap Mama's Class, Maribel Igitol again took the cake with a perfect 50 points. She was followed by Marlyn Castro with her 44 points.

Elleayah Cruz was the lone competitor in the four-lap Minis I and went home with an automatic 50 points.

The results of other divisions in the February edition of the 2023 Monster Energy Point Series Race will be published in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune*.



LaMelo Ball breaks ankle in Hornets' win over Pistons

PAGE 17

Saipan Tribune Sports

Dolphins, Ayuyus' lead boys varsity caging

PAGE 19



20 TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2023

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Villafria completes 60K ultra marathon in PH

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Run Saipan member Ronald Villafria is looking for a donation of new shoes.

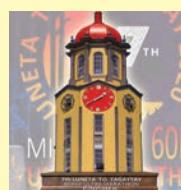
This, after he essentially ran his latest pair to the ground completing the Luneta To Tagaytay 60KM Midnight Ultramarathon last weekend in the Philippines.

The 52-year-old longtime Saipan resident, who is currently taking up vocational courses in his native country, finished the grueling race from the Philippine capital to the popular holiday town south of Ma-

nila in 10:14:38.

Villafria and around 200 intrepid ultramarathoners began their 60-kilometer trek at 11:20pm on Saturday, Feb. 26, and completed the journey to the boondocks the next day, Feb. 27, a Sunday.

Villafria, who trained for the 60K by running several long-distance races including the 7/11 32K last Feb. 4, said the most challenging part of the Luneta To Tagaytay 60KM Midnight Ultramarathon was the last part when they had to traverse the uphill climb to Tagaytay, which rises to the



height of 2,000 feet.

Another challenge was the pollution of Metro Manila. Although. Villafria said the smog became less of a problem the farther they ran from the capital.

As for the best part of the run, he said hands down it's the scenic and breathtaking view going up to Tagaytay where you can see the provinces of Laguna and Batangas below.

He dedicated his successful completion of the ultramarathon to his running groups—Run Saipan in the CNMI and Nueva Ecija Runners in the Philippines. He also thanked

his wife, Lorna, for her all-out support "in all my sports activities that includes all my training and competitions."

Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz Jr. congratulated Villafria for testing the limits of his running capability.

"Spectacular job to Ronald. His Run Saipan family couldn't be any more proud. We look forward to him increasing his ultra marathon distances and achieving success."

He added that like when Run Saipan members cheered for Jalen Lucido in the two times he entered

See VILLAFRIA on Page 19



Villafria

Young lifters top Guam tourney

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Despite the nerves that come with international competition, four young up-and-coming weightlifters from the CNMI HD Weightlifting Camp broke through their first off-island tournament with flying colors.



Cheyenne Manuel, Anniegail Manuel, Jaden Andrew, and Aiden Gimed went up against competitors from Guam and Palau and showcased the strength of CNMI's youth as they all won first place in their respective divisions in the Guam Open National Championships 2023 last Saturday at the Guam National Guard Center in Barrigada, Guam.

Cheyenne competed in the open 64kg weight class; An-

niegail was in the junior 71-kg weight class; Andrew competed in the youth 55-kg weight

See YOUNG on Page 19

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
HD Weightlifting Camp youth weightlifter Cheyenne, front left; and Anniegail Manuel, front right; Aiden Gimed, standing right; Jaden Andrew, standing left; pose with Olympic weightlifting gold medalist Hidilyn Diaz, back left; husband and coach Julius Naranjo; and coach Angel San Nicolas during the Guam Open National Championships 2023 last Saturday at the Guam National Guard Center in Barrigada, Guam.



LAO ZHANG
Billie Inabo Pangelinan in action in the Mini II Class of last Sunday's 2023 Monster Energy Point Series Race at the Cowtown Race Track.

Billie didn't lose her No. 1 spot in Mini II

By MARK RABAGO
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Billie Inabo Pangelinan kind of took Phil Collins' advice in his '80s hit when she didn't lose her No. 1 spot in the Mini II Class of last Sunday's 2023 Monster Energy Point Series Race at the Cowtown Race Track.

The 13-year-old DanDan Middle School student again rolled a perfect 50 points to beat her erstwhile rivals in the

Powerpuff Girls Class T.J. Ferrer and Nanako Celis, which finished with 42 points apiece. The former, however, took the No. 2 spot in Marianas Racing Association's February race by virtue of topping the



"had incidents where I almost was taken out from sliding all over the place. It was really sunny and bright out there. I was hoping for some rain for a tacky track," said Pangelinan on winning the six-lap division twice in a row.

That's why understandably, she said the toughest part of the weekend series was trying not to slip and avoid the big rocks.

See BILLIE on Page 19